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5 Cents

PUCK AND LUCK

A YOUNG MONTE CRISTO,
OR, BACK TO THE WORLD FOR VENGEANCE

By JAS. C. MERRITT



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PLUCK AND LUCK

Stories of Adventure

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No. 697.

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 11, 1911.

Price 5 Cents.

A Young Monte Cristo

OR,

Back to the World for Vengeance

JAS. C. MERRITT

CHAPTER I.

CHARGED WITH AN AWFUL CRIME.

"And the worst of it all is, Gus, that I am getting afraid for myself. I am sure the man wants to ruin me, and is only waiting for a good chance."

"Nonsense, Fred! you are entirely too sensitive; you get an idea into your head, and you enlarge upon it until your imagination has carried you away beyond all bounds. I know you have been having a pretty tough time of it lately, and all your folks as well, but why not make the best of a bad job, old man, and look upon the bright side?"

"Tough time of it! Well, I should say so! When a fellow's father has been swindled out of a cool two millions by a rascal like Ralph Pomeroy, and his family have dropped from a position where they had everything they could possibly wish for, to one in which it is hard to get enough to eat, I should say that the word tough hardly fills the bill."

"Come, come, Fred; you ought to be a little careful how you use that word 'swindled' in connection with Ralph Pomeroy. It will get you into trouble yet. You don't actually know that he ever swindled your father out of a cent."

"Yes, I do. I know it as well as I know anything. Why, Gus, he's got everything we ever owned—the house on Fifth avenue, the house in Forty-fifth street, that big store on Broadway below Grand street, and a whole lot more. How in the world he managed to get the best of the old gentleman to such an extent as he has is what gets me."

"Hasn't your father told you anything about it?"

"No; but he has promised to. When he put me into Ralph Pomeroy's office down on Broad street—you know, of course, that he is a broker in the Stock Exchange—he told me to keep my eyes open as to the character of the man. I did so, and I am satisfied that he is what the boys call a 'rank skin.'"

"Very likely. But that don't make it certain that he has skinned your father. To be sure he has all the property, but he might have bought it and paid for it for all you know; don't you see?"

"I don't believe it, Gus; and I must say, if my father would only make up his mind to speak out and tell us frankly the cause of all his misfortunes during the last year, it would be better for all. Besides, Pomeroy persecutes my sister almost to death. He wants her to marry him, but she hates him, and won't hear of it at all."

"I should say not. Bertha is altogether too good for him. But, I say, Fred the next is 110th street; we'd better move up near the door and be ready to get off."

The speakers were two boys, both of an age, say nineteen or thereabouts, passengers in a train upon the Third avenue elevated railroad during its trip to Harlem, the upper portion of the city of New York.

Their names are Fred Howard and Gustave Ripley, called by his intimate acquaintances, Gus; they have been school-mates during all the years of their boyhood, and are now what they always have been, the firmest of friends.

It is the evening of October 10th, 1882, and both the boys are returning from their respective positions, Gus Ripley in a lawyer's office, Fred Howard in that of the broker mentioned above.

When the acquaintance of these boys first began, the difference in their positions in life and their future prospects had been immense.

Now, by a singular turn in the wheel of fortune, they were very nearly the same.

At the time when they had entered Mr. Briggs' private institute

for the instruction of young gentlemen, Gus had been the son of an eminently respectable, but entirely impecunious, bankrupt merchant, Fred the son of Samuel Howard, one of New York's best-known real estate operators and millionaires.

Now all this was changed.

The father of Gus Ripley has been dead for a year or more, and he being the only relative Master Gus had possessed in the world, the boy, without a penny to bless him, had been left to shift for himself.

Meanwhile the millions of the real estate operator had just one year before, in some mysterious way unknown to his family, slipped out of his hands and left the family in circumstances reduced to the last degree.

From their Fifth avenue mansion to a little cottage on East 108th street the change had been great, but there the ruined real estate operator had found shelter for himself and his family, and there they lived at the time of which we write.

But if Samuel Howard had grown suddenly poor, Ralph Pomeroy, a Wall street broker, whom he had started in life, and through whom most of his operations had been conducted, had suddenly launched out into wealth and the most luxurious elegance—by what means no one knew.

Yet it was an open secret that he was to-day possessed of every piece of real estate which his benefactor, for Samuel Howard had taken him a poor boy from the streets—had formerly owned.

This much Fred Howard knew, and no more, except that he had some three months previous accepted a clerkship in Pomeroy's office offered him by the broker with great professions of friendship, and accepted it by his father's command.

Thus it was that the boy found himself, so far as worldly wealth was concerned, upon the same social plane as Gus Ripley, his friend.

The train now rolled into the 110th street station of the elevated road, and the boys hurriedly left the cars.

Descending the steps to the street, Gus Ripley held out his hand to bid his friend good-night.

His way lay to the west of Third avenue, Fred Howard's to the east.

"Good-night, Fred. Don't let yourself get down in the mouth, old man, there is a better day coming for you, I'm sure."

"I hope so, Gus, but when a fellow sees his employer is dead against him, and knows he's crooked, why—but I won't bore you with my troubles any longer. Good-night. I'll see you in the morning, like enough, on the way down-town."

The boys have separated now, Gus Ripley going across the avenue, Fred Howard turning down toward 108th street, to seek his own humble home.

As he walked along in the cool autumn air, a sense of the great change which had come over his young life, and the many trials which he was daily called upon to encounter seemed to press about the boy with redoubled force.

"Come—come, my friend, you must brace up and be a man," he muttered to himself, as he walked hurriedly along. "You still have as kind a father as ever a boy had in the world, and a loving mother as well, to say nothing of dear Bertha, who, for a sister, is simply perfection itself—hello! what in the world are all those people doing about our house?"

He had turned the corner of 108th street now.

A crowd of men, women and children, all pushing and elbowing each other upon the sidewalk and in the middle of the street, were seen gathered about the door of the cottage in which he dwelt.

Fred Howard sprang forward with a bound.

In a moment's time he also was elbowing his way among the crowd.

"What's happened here?" he demanded, his face as pale as death, of a stout Irishwoman, who was trying to force her way through the little gate, in vain endeavor to gain the door. "Is anyone hurt in that house? Has any accident occurred?"

"Accident! Troth and it's murder! There's five corpses a-laying did at this very minnit on the parlor flure! Git out of me way, ye big loafer! I will git in, I tell ye!"

The woman's last remark was addressed to a grimy coal-heaver, who, with a short clay pipe stuck in his mouth, and an empty coal-basket upon his shoulder, had attempted to head her off in her rush for the door.

But Fred Howard heard it not.

He had already heard quite enough.

Dashing through the crowd which blocked up the little stoop, filled the open doorway, and extended into the parlor of the cottage, with the ferocity of a madman he forced the gaping curiosity-seekers right and left, and entered the room.

Those within made way for him as he approached.

"It is the son—poor fellow!" broke in whispers from the lips of several in the crowd.

"What is it? For mercy sake, what is it?" cried the boy, seizing the arm of a blue-coated policeman who was vainly endeavoring to force the people from the little room.

"Do you belong here?"

"Yes."

"Then summon all your courage, my boy, and follow me into the back room."

The words were kindly spoken. The officer gazed upon the excited face of the boy with more sympathy than is usually shown by men of his class.

"What relation are you to the people of this house?"

"I am the son of Samuel Howard. For mercy sake, don't keep me in suspense. What terrible calamity has occurred?"

"Well, it's death, my poor fellow!" said the policeman, kindly. "Your father and mother have been brutally murdered; your sister is nowhere to be found. Get back there, will you? Get back, if you are men and give the boy a show!"

This to the pressing, eager crowd.

"Take me to them, officer."

The boy's face was livid now.

He uttered no other word.

Taking the boy kindly by the arm, he cautiously opened the door leading to the back parlor, and drew him into the room.

With a cry of sickening horror, Fred Howard looked from one form to the other, at last flinging himself by his mother's side, and kissing her pallid lips again and again.

"Who did it? How did it happen?" he cried, hoarsely. "Tell me, or I shall go mad!"

Before the officer had time to reply, the door was suddenly opened again, and a second policeman, followed by a man in citizen's clothes, hastily entered the room.

The boy had now arisen to his feet.

"That's him, officer," said the stranger, pointing toward Fred. "I thought we'd find him here."

As he spoke, the man advanced toward the afflicted boy, and seized him roughly by the arm.

"Sorry to intrude upon you at such a time as this, young man," he said, in short, quick tones, "but business is business, and I've got an order for your arrest. My name is Riley, and I'm a detective. Just allow me to see what you've got in the pocket of that coat of yours."

As he spoke, the man by a dexterous movement pinioned the arms of Fred Howard to his side with one hand, thrusting the other into the inside pocket of his short sack coat.

"Ah! here it is! just as I thought!" he exclaimed, at the same time snapping a pair of handcuffs about the wrists of the boy.

"Fred Howard, I arrest you for stealing one thousand dollars from the office of your employer, Ralph Pomeroy, of Broad street. Sorry to add to your troubles, but you'll have to come with me."

He held up a little package as he spoke, tied around with a paper strap, and fastened with a pin.

It was a packet of bills to the number of ten, and of the denomination of a hundred dollars each.

CHAPTER II.

MAGNUS CROMETY.

"Now, then! With the lock-step march!"

It was a keeper in the penitentiary upon Blackwell's Island who spoke. Those whom he addressed were a gang of prisoners in the striped convicts' dress, who stood in a row facing him in the penitentiary yard.

At the word of command all turned, and each facing his neighbor's back, with hands pressed upon the shoulders of the man ahead, marched with lock-step into the grim, fortress-like building, and, under the charge of the keeper, distributed themselves, each in his own particular cell.

Lights are extinguished, iron doors are clanged, bolts and bars shot into their places with a bang.

The Blackwell's Island penitentiary has seen the end of another day—the prisoners are shut in their cells for the night.

Some occupy these cells alone; in others two, and sometimes three—but this more rarely—are stowed.

It is with the inmates of one of these double cells with whom we have to deal.

Its number is 121.

They are two, an old man with long white beard, and features weazened with time; and a young, intelligent, black-haired boy, whose age cannot be more than nineteen.

Cromie makes strange bed-fellows. For six months past this ill-assorted pair have spent such of their time as has not been devoted to hard labor together within the bare stone walls of this prison cell.

The man is a Spanish sailor, of whose history nothing is known, save that he is entered upon the prison books as Magnus Cromety, sentenced for one year, for murderous assault.

The boy we have met before.

It is Fred Howard, sentenced also for one year for larceny from his employer, Ralph Pomeroy, the Broad street broker, saved from Sing-Sing only through the elemeney of the judge before whom his case was tried.

Never again did the eyes of the unhappy youth rest upon the dead forms of his murdered parents. The murder is still a deep mystery, while of his sister from that day to this—and it is now early in May, 1882—not the slightest trace has been found.

If the cup of this boy's misery had been nearly full at the time of his conversation with Gus Ripley, his friend, upon the elevated train, it was now full and running over, for surely his situation could be but little worse than it is.

But there is no look of vain repining upon Fred Howard's face.

Those set lips, those keen flashing eyes, that hard, fixed look upon his face, tell of but one desire, one object in life.

Revenge!

Revenge upon the man whom he firmly believed had wrought all the evil happenings which pressed with crushing force upon his youthful mind.

It needs no physiognomist to see at a glance that if this boy could by any chance be given his freedom and means to act, that Ralph Pomeroy, broker, Broad street, had best keep a sharp lookout ahead.

So surely are the means placed in the hands of this boy to act what has now become the one desire of his life, so surely will Ralph Pomeroy find an avenger upon his track of whom he had best beware.

But stone-walls and iron bars stand between them now, and even when the sentence of this boy is served, what can a penniless orphan hope to accomplish against this Broad street millionaire?

Nothing.

To think of it is absurd.

And yet—

"Boy!"

Fred Howard has raised his head from his hands in which he had buried it, as half undressed he is seated upon the edge of his rude bunk, lost in meditation.

He who has thus addressed him is the grizzled old Spanish sailor, seated on the bunk below.

Between the boy and this man a friendship had sprung up during the lonely hours spent together in their common cell, notwithstanding the total difference in their ages and previous condition, and the great difficulty with which each understood the other's words.

"Well, Mr. Cromety, can I do anything for you to-night?"

"Nothing, my son, you doa noting for de old man. I say noting, I lie! You doa mucha. You maka him lova you, lika he muehacho—how you saya him, leetle son?"

"You and I are companions in misery, Mr. Cromety. We might as well be civil to each other. I have done no more."

"Noa, noa, you tell not de truth. You are good, you are noble, you liva many years and forgeta dis villain islan, dese high stone walls; hcy, Senorito Fred? Is not dat so?"

"I don't know. Mr. Cromety. My heart is very heavy to-night. I feel as though I had nothing to live for—I almost wish I was old and on the brink of the grave like—like—"

"Like Magnus Cromety, like meself, saya him muehacho. Fear not me. I love you, for your stout young body, for your kind heart, your handsome face. Holy Diego! but you are ze good boy, ze bully boy, ze handsome boy. Ef I vos only young and strong like you."

"And what would you do, Mr. Cromety? I take you for a good old fellow at heart. If you hadn't gone off and got drunk on the day of your arrival from California you would never have run that knife into the fellow in the sailor's boarding-house, where you got into a row, and as a consequence would not have been here now. Your time will soon be up, and you have lots of good years before you yet."

"Senorito Fred, it ees not so. I am seventy-five years old. I cannot afford it. Zat I lose un ano—a year. Nor will I. Leesten, senorito. I leef dis villain hole zis very night!"

"Leave the penitentiary! Why you have four months still to serve. Do you mean to escape?"

"Hush, hush!" cried the old sailor, springing to his feet and clapping his finger to his mouth.

"Not a word, senorito! not a word above ze visper. I have amigos yet—vat you call friend—zey help me; von you work I work, but zere is a deference. You hammer ze stone in de day, I file ze iron ven my boy Fred be sleep."

"File iron, Mr. Cromety!" exclaimed Fred, dropping to the floor of the cell from his position upon the edge of the upper bunk. "What in the world do you mean?"

"You sware to not betray me, Senorito Fred?"

"I swear with all my heart. Do you suppose I would seek to prevent your escape from this villainous hole? Not at all. I should be only too glad to get out myself."

"Young man," said the old Spanish sailor, in a low whisper, and speaking so rapidly that we will not pretend to follow the peculiarity of his broken words, "you shall escape. I, Magnus Cromety, have sworn it; you shall escape, and what is more, you shall escape this very night. When I said that I had friends outside I spoke the truth. My greatest friend is money, of which I have a little where I can lay my hand upon it, and I have used it well. Every bar on yonder window is sawed almost through; they can be removed by the slightest pressure of the hand. At midnight a boat will await us at the end of this island, while the keeper will be blind to our movements, bribed by me. What say you, boy? will you join the old man, and leave this place behind forever, or will you drag out three months more?"

"Go?" exclaimed Fred, "of course I will! You and I are chums now, old man. Do you suppose I would go back on you, and let you go alone?"

"Your hand on it, boy," cried the old sailor, seizing the hand of Fred Howard within his own wrinkled, hairy palm. "I liked you when we were first thrown together in this cell, for your kindness to me when I was so sick, for a dozen acts of kindness since. Now I have learned to love you like a son. I am an old man, and without a friend left on earth, but I have within my grasp, if I can but escape from these walls, millions upon millions in gold. You shall help me to get it. You shall enjoy life with me when we have got it, every penny of it shall be yours when I die."

Was the man mad?

This grizzled old sailor, this convict, sentenced to Blackwell's Island for an assault occurring in a drunken brawl in a sailor's boarding-house in New York's vilest slums, could he be possessed of millions in gold?

The man was mad, mad as a March hare!

"You don't believe it," he said, with a grin, which made his wrinkled features look even more hideous than they naturally did. "My son, I am telling you nothing but the truth. We have yet to wait until midnight before we can act; meanwhile listen to my tale.

"In 1852 there sailed from San Francisco, bound for New York, by way of Cape Horn, the brig San Cristobal, loaded with golden bars from the California mines. Her entire hold was converted into a treasure room, there was on board five millions and over in solid gold.

"The captain, one John Hulse by name, was the owner of this gold, which he had dug himself, the mate was his son, and every one of the crew except myself related to him—every member of his family was on board.

"They had been successful in their mining operations, they chose this method of taking home the treasure they had secured. I was hired as the cook.

"We descended the South American coast in safety, rounded the Horn, and slowly crept up the Atlantic side, until at last, upon the south shore of Long Island, within a day's sail of New York harbor, we encountered a storm, the San Cristobal was wrecked upon the bar, and sunk with its treasure and every soul on board. I alone, by good luck, was washed ashore alive, clinging to a broken spar.

"Fred, you who are now to me as a son, every one of those golden bars still lie in the hold of the San Cristobal, whose hulk can be still plainly seen at low water, resting upon that bar. Escape with me to-night, and we will raise it together.

"It belongs to no one living by any greater right than you and me."

"But why in the name of common sense have you never done something about this before?" exclaimed Fred, eyeing the old man incredulously.

"In 1852! Why, that was thirty years ago!"

The old sailor raised his closed hand to his mouth and made a motion as though drinking.

"De visky, muchache," he said, abruptly, "de visky is de cause of it all. I go to jail here, for drunk. I fall down and break my leg, and go to hospital. Dey ship me drunk for China. I am not to get back myself able until now, and now I am een prison again, and it is de visky still. Come with me, help me in my endeavor, help me from my old enemy, de visky, and I geef you ail dis golden treasure in de end, only let me haf for myself plenty of de visky till I die."

The hours passed.

Magnus Cromety related his strange tale again and again, with such minuteness of detail that Fred, at first thinking the old man mad, was almost inclined to believe.

As they still talked, a bell in the city opposite the island was heard to slowly toll the hour of twelve.

At its last stroke the old Spaniard sprang to his feet, and grasped the bars of the little window of their common cell.

"The time has come!" he whispered, "now then, muchacho, for freedom! for wealth! for all that life has worth living! It is all ours if we can but escape from this island to-night!"

CHAPTER III.

"THE GOLD OF THE SAN CRISTOBAL MINE!"

Magnus Cromety gently shook the iron bars of cell No. 121, Blackwell's Island penitentiary.

One by one they yielded to his touch.

From above and below they had been skillfully sawn through by this shrewd old master-hand.

"Now, then, fer de ladder, boy," he murmured, as Fred Howard, with wondering eye, watched the old sailor pull bar after bar from the window and fling them noiselessly upon the mattress of the bunk by the side of which he stood.

He produced a prayer-book of more than ordinary size, bound in pig-skin, and ornamented with a huge gilt cross upon one side and a representation of the Blessed Virgin upon the other.

"Dis dey leef me; it is ze book dat leads to life," he whispered, with another of his hideous contortions of the face, half-grin, half-smile. "Dey tink I pray by him, but dey know not that he contain liberty for me and liberty for my friend Fred Howard, too."

As he spoke, the Spaniard touched a secret spring at one end of the book.

Suddenly the gilt cross flew back as though upon a hinge, and from a small compartment the old man drew yard after yard of peculiar dark-looking thread.

It was no bigger round than ordinary twine, but of such amazing strength that Fred, pulling upon it as he would, with the old man tugging at the other end, could not break it any more than he could have broken a half-inch rope.

With the utmost dexterity, Magnus Cromety proceeded to weave from this thread a rope ladder of sufficient width to take in the foot of a good-sized man.

His hands flew like lightning as he twisted and knotted his wonderful cord, while round after round of the ladder fell at his feet.

Cell No. 121 was situated in the south wing of the new penitentiary upon Blackwell's Island, in the second story above the ground.

The windows through which Fred Howard now peered cautiously was not over forty feet above the grassy slope which extends off toward the rounded stone wall which overlooks the East river, with New York on the right hand, Hunter's Point on the left, and a series of ragged rocks standing well above the water at low tide, slippery with sea-weed, and stretching out one after the other for the distance of several hundred yards.

"Do you see anything?" asked the old sailor, in a low, hushed voice.

"Nothing. The guard is not there as usual. Hold! There is a row-boat with two men in it creeping up under the wall!"

"Good! I fix de guard. He trouble not us. De boat hab my friends also."

"They are standing off between the rocks and the wall."

"Good again! My ladder is now vera long. He do; leat me come. Now, muchacho, we go!"

Pushing Fred gently from the cell window as he spoke, Magnus Cromety placed his own form in the aperture and flung his rope-ladder out.

It reached the ground, and left something to spare.

"To ze ground, boy," he whispered; "you are de lightest! go ze first. I come after. We reach de boat at one jump, and, presto—we are rowed away!"

Fred Howard needed no second invitation.

Springing upon the broad window-ledge with a bound, he thrust his body out feet foremost, and ran down the ladder like a cat, the old sailor having previously made his end fast to the iron catch of the cell door.

Now, from the penitentiary on Blackwell's Island such an escape is wholly possible, but is seldom attempted, owing to the difficulty of leaving the island, upon the one hand, and the shortness of the terms of sentence upon the other.

With but a few months to serve, few prisoners would care to risk their lives to effect an escape.

By Magnus Cromety, however, the case was evidently otherwise viewed.

Uttering one short, peculiar whistle, which Fred observed from his station below caused the boat to approach more closely to the wall, he thrust his body through the window, and began the descent of the light ladder of cords which he had so skillfully prepared.

It creaked ominously beneath his weight, at the same time swinging to and fro in spite of all that his companion could do to steady it from below.

Scarce had he reached the middle of the descent, when suddenly, and without the slightest warning, the strands parted, and the form of the old sailor was precipitated to the ground.

An involuntary cry of horror burst from the lips of the boy.

"Are you hurt?" he whispered, bending over the old man, who lay stretched upon the gravel walk.

"Who goes there? Halt, or we fire!"

From the furthermost corner of the great stone fortress the cry went forth, and two guards, rifles in hand, could be seen running toward the spot by the light of the moon, now just commencing to rise.

Magnus Cromety gave one sickening gasp, and turned his eyes upon the boy who bent over his form.

"I am killed, muchacho," he whispered faintly. "My end has come at last. Fly! save yourself, and possess the gold of the San Cristobal alone!"

He seized the hand of the frightened youth as he spoke, and thrusting it into his bosom, Fred felt a roll of stiff paper touch his finger ends.

"Ze paper—take him—he tell all! Make ze boat, and leef me to my fate!"

It was all he could do.

To remain where he was was but to invite death at the hands of the men who were approaching upon the run.

Grasping the roll of paper, which he thrust within his clothes, he sprang across the grassy slope which divides the prison from the river wall.

Great Heaven!

The boat was gone!

Alarmed by the cry of the guards, the rowers had pulled stealthily away, and could now be faintly distinguished far out in the stream.

At the same moment the sharp report of a rifle was heard, and a bullet whistled past Fred Howard's head.

There was no time for consideration.

The possibilities of escape lay in action, not in thought.

"Halt, you rascal! Halt, or you are a dead man!"

Even as the cry went up a second and a third bullet cut the air, one to the right, and the other to the left of where he stood.

"I must swim for it!" muttered the boy to himself.

Without the slightest hesitation he had leaped boldly from the river wall.

The crack of rifle shots and the shouts of men broke upon the midnight air.

Out in the river, a small black object could be seen bobbing up and down upon the waves, and bearing a suspicious resemblance to the head of a boy.

The guards fired upon it, and it disappeared.

Had their shots been effectual?

That was something they never knew.

They found the form of the old Spanish sailor, who, as they raised him, breathed his last.

An old internal wound had been opened by the fall; the blood had rushed into his heart.

They found the ingeniously made ladder, they found the little pile of iron bars within the cell which Magnus Cromety had so skillfully severed by aid of a marvelous little file.

As they raised the body of the aged man and bore it roughly within the prison walls, there scrambled lightly upon the furthest of the series of rocks which we have just described a boy dressed in convict's clothes.

Raising himself to his full height in the moonlight—the surface of the rock, all covered as it was with slippery sea-weed affording but an indifferent hold for his naked feet—he threw his hands aloft and turned his bare head toward the prison walls.

"Safe at last!" he cried, the light of triumph flashing from his eyes. "Look well to yourself, Ralph Pomeroy; from this night my work of vengeance begins, for the gold of the San Cristobal belongs to me alone."

CHAPTER IV.

THE ESCAPE—A FRIEND IN NEED.

In spite of the dramatic words uttered by Fred Howard at the close of the last chapter, as, balancing himself upon the slippery rocks, all overgrown with sea-weed, which was like so much glass beneath his naked feet, the boy was very far from the end of his difficulties yet.

Between those rocks and the shore, either on the New York or the Long Island side, there lay a stretch of water both broad and deep.

It is true there were few swimmers in New York not classed among professionals better able to cope with the swiftly running currents which sweep upon either side of Blackwell's Island than he.

Swimming had been Fred's favorite sport from his earliest boyhood, and he would have had no more hesitation of attempting to cross either to one side of the East river or the other, under ordinary circumstances, than of taking a plunge at Coney Island or attempting to swim the length of a floating bath.

But there existed a great barrier in the way, and one, moreover, which rendered his chances of reaching the shore alive exceedingly doubtful, to say the least.

It is true that the keepers on the island, having lost sight of his form in the darkness, had retired from the river wall and abandoned the chase, but upon both shores there were men stationed, and provided with powerful night glasses and guns, on the constant lookout for just such escapes as his.

If he should be espied by one of these watchers, he knew full well that he need expect to have no mercy shown him; let him be seen for so much as an instant and a bullet would be sent flying at his head.

He crouched down upon the slippery surface of the rock, drawing his feet above the line of the lapping waves, which, each time they touched his naked flesh, sent a chill through his entire frame.

"I must swim for it," muttered the boy to himself. "I must take my chances and move straight ahead. I can't go back unless I go to almost certain death, for the keepers will fire at me just so sure as they catch sight of my head—besides, to go back is not my style."

Scrambling to his feet with a silent prayer to Heaven, he plunged once more into the chilling waters of the river, and struck out boldly for the New York shore.

He had adopted the well-known side stroke, the most telling of all that a swimmer can take, and, keeping his head under water as much as possible, rapidly approached the line of canal boats,

brick schooners, ice barges, and other small craft which lay at Forty-ninth street and the great malt-house at Sixth street above.

Raising his head slightly, in order to take his bearings, he now perceived the dark outline of a great ice barge directly ahead of him, and was just debating whether to attempt to board her, or, passing on, creep in under a neighboring wharf when a rifle-shot whistled past his ears.

"Stop there!"

Upon the upper deck of the ice barge a man armed with a rifle stood out in full view.

"Keep back! keep back!" he shouted; "another stroke forward and you are a dead man!"

At the same instant the sound of a shrill whistle broke upon the still night air, and a boat propelled by two stout fellows shot out from behind the ice barge directly toward the swimmer.

With the quickness of thought, Fred Howard dove beneath the surface, and swimming under water—an accomplishment at which he was most expert—continued with all the strength he could muster toward the maze of small craft which lined the shore.

For the full space of a minute his form was hidden from sight; when he arose again to the surface, he had passed the ice barge in safety, and found himself between two schooners, one loaded down with rough unhewn stone, the other with brick.

Looking back, he could see the guard upon the barge searching in every direction with his glass.

He must dive again, that was perfectly clear, or his capture was but a question of time.

But what chance of escape was there after all?

The alarm had been given—he was dressed in convict's clothes. Could he hope to move one block through the streets of the city without being instantly detected?

"Heaven help me! What shall I do?" he murmured, raising himself in the water to dive again. "I can't keep this thing up much longer; they are bound to see me the instant I attempt to land—"

"Hist, hist! young feller! lay low. Give me yer hand an' I'll be after yankin' ye inter me boat in three shakes of a ram's tail!"

A small row-boat suddenly shot out from behind the brick schooner in the darkness, in which sat a tall, heavily-bearded man, who, leaning toward him over the side, extended a great bare arm and powerful hand.

There was no time for deliberation.

If a friend, this man was truly a friend in need. If a foe, he was completely at his mercy; it would have been simple folly to resist.

Grasping the extended hand, he was instantly drawn into the boat, and the man, seizing the oars, which appeared to be muffled, pulled silently back among the surrounding craft, and so far as the boy's pursuers were concerned disappeared from view.

"An' ye had a close call there, me lad," said the boatman, looking down at the boy as he lay crouching upon two large bags which lay in the bottom of the boat.

"It's a mighty fortunate thing that I spied ye, so it is, for Dan Dove never goes back on a fellow-being in trouble, ye can jest bet yer boots on that, ivery time."

"I wish I could do something to repay you," murmured the boy, with a troubled glance at his dripping convict's dress; "but I'm in poor shape to do it now."

"Oh! to the mischief wid the pay! Sure I know'd what ye wor the moment I seed ye. Ye're not the first boy with the striped shirt I've helped by a long chalk. Fact is, young fellow, I am in sympathy wid yez all over there on the island; for between you an' me an' the gashouse, I'm a crook meself, an' ther's no telling how soon I may be cotched an' made to wear them same kind of clothes. D'y'e see them bags?"

"Yes, I do. What's in them?"

"Sugar. I'm a river speculator, I am. Me name is Dan Dove, which me friends call Dynamite Dove, both for short an' because I've the cause of old Ireland always fornist me heart. I works by night mostly, pickin' up a livin' on the water-front the best way I can. There's me house up there on the side of the hill. Kape close behind me, an' I'll sell you a bully suit of clothes, an' ye can pay me the fust time ye have a chance, for I'm not afraid to trust a likley-looking lad such as you."

The boat had touched the shore as the man concluded his remarks, and seizing one of the great bags which lay in the bottom and bidding Fred take the other, with a wary glance about him to see if the coast was clear, he led the way up a rickety flight of steps in the side of the bank, and paused before a little shanty half hidden beneath the hill.

Setting down the bag, Mr. Dan Dove now produced a key, and proceeded to unlock the door of the shanty, which was, in common with the heavy wooden shutters which shielded its windows from the impudent gaze of the outside world, painted an emerald green.

"In wid ye," he said, briefly.

Fred entered, and depositing his bag upon the floor, the door was shut.

"Now you are as safe as a bug in a rug," said the man, striking a light. "Off wid your clothes without an instant's delay. Them blame spies may be here any moment. Off wid them, I say!"

There was no denying the soundness of this advice.

As rapidly as possible Fred removed his tell-tale striped clothing, and stood in the middle of the little room as naked as he was born.

Scarce had he done so than Dan Dove, who had passed into an inner room, again appeared, with a cheap suit of clothes, shirt, shoes and underwear in his hands.

Without a word he gathered up the convict's dress discarded by the boy, and raising a trap-door in the floor, dropped them into the dark space beneath.

"Ye owe me twenty dollars, lad," he said, briefly, "and be the same token, ye wur mighty lucky in strikin' me as ye did. Whin the boys lave the island suddenly, or permiscuous-like, as one may say, they always strike for their Uncle Dove, who has a shute of clothes always ready on a pinch. By the way, what's yer name?"

"Fred Howard," replied our hero, hurrying on the clothes. "I'm a million times obliged to you, Mr. Dove. You shall certainly be paid, never fear."

"Oh, that's all right," answered the man, with a short laugh. "I have to trust in this kind of business, for, d'y'e mind, me customers niver have any money on their first call. But if a man has spunk enough to escape, he'll not go baek on a frind in nade—an' no one iver yet did it to me."

"You can depend upon me," answered Fred, putting on his shoes. "Rely upon it, Mr. Dove, you'll hear from me before many days."

"Take yer toime, young feller, take yer toime. I wish ye may get on yer feet ag'in, for yer own sake, that's all. An' what were ye up for—Holy Vargin! what's that knoekin' on me dure?"

"Open up here, Dove!" cried a stern voice without. "We want to see the inside of this house."

"Be the bones of Saint Patriek! an' the river cops is upon me!" cried the man, turning pale. "Quick, young feller! Up the ladder wid the rocks beyant, and all ye have to do is to take to yer heels an' run. I must look out for me bags!"

He jerked open the hidden trap-door even as he spoke, and with a savage kick shot the bags of stolen sugar down into the space below.

Even as he did so, the door upon which blow after blow was being rained burst open, and three men, two of them in policeman's dress, dashed into the room.

It was the wather on the ice-barge who had them, but so far as Fred Howard was concerned he had made that miss which is universally acknowledged to be as good as a mile.

Springing up the ladder, he had crept through the scuttle to the roof of the shanty, and leaping silently to the rocks, even as the officers burst in upon the frightened Dove, he dashed away, and his young and stalwart form was soon lost in the darkness as he scrambled up the side of the hill.

CHAPTER V.

GUS RIPLEY ENTERTAINS AN EARLY VISITOR, AND LISTENS TO A GOLDEN TALE.

When Mr. Gus Ripley, lawyer's clerk, undertook to sleep, he did it as he did everything else—with a will.

It made no difference whether the pillows were high or low, whether the bed was hard or soft, once let him get his limbs well stretched out, and he was off to the land of Nod in less time than it takes some men to say their prayers.

Upon the night of May 23d, 1883, Gus Ripley had retired early to bed, and long before mid-night not only he, but every other occupant of the little two-story brick cottage in East 108th street, had sunk to repose.

Now, when Gus Ripley got to sleeping too soundly, he was usually blessed with dreams, and upon this particular night, somewhere between half-past three and four, he found himself, in imagination, engaged in scooping up gold by the handful out of the open sea.

He had filled every pocket, filled his hat, loaded down his shoes, and was just in the act of pulling off his trousers for the purpose of converting the legs into bags and stuffing them full of the shining yellow pieces, when:

"Rat-tat-tat!"

In the midst of his dream there seemed to be someone knocking at his chamber door.

He started up in bed and listened.

The knocking was repeated again.

"Rat-tat-tat!"

Instead of the door it seemed to come from the window, which was partly open at the top and which overlooked the roof of a piazza easily reached by a skillful climber from the street.

Gus Ripley sprang out of bed with a bound.

What was going on outside that window?

Could it be that a burglar was trying to enter the house? But no; burglars usually do not stop to knock.

"Hey! Gus, Gus, let me in, old man!"

The words, spoken in a clear but suppressed voice, came through the open space from the piazza roof beyond.

"Good heavens, that's Fred Howard's voice!" exclaimed the suddenly awakened sleeper, in astonishment.

Springing across the room, he flung open the window and peered out upon the piazza roof.

Even as he did so, a young man, dressed in a cheap suit of ill-fitting clothes, leaped through the window into the room.

"Here I am, Gus!" he exclaimed in a whisper; "a bad penny, you know, always returns. Shut the window and pull down the curtain. I've just given the cops the slip!"

"Fred! my dear, dear friend! what in the world brings you here—have you escaped?—have—"

"Yes, escaped from the island, Gus, and, thank Heaven, escaped with a whole skin, too! My! but it does me good to see your dear old face again."

He wrung the hand of his friend as he spoke again and again.

"Tell me, Gus—my sister?" he exclaimed, "have any tidings been received of her?"

"Not a word, Fred, since my last letter—not a word."

A shadow passed over the face of the young convict.

"Another entry on the score against my enemy," he muttered between his teeth. "Gus, for Ralph Pomeroy the day of reckoning is close at hand; but go back to bed, old fellow—you'll catch your death of cold if you sit shivering there."

"No, no, I can sleep no more until I have heard all about it," answered the other, pulling on his clothes. "Shall I strike a light? Is any one watching the house, do you think?"

"Light up all you please, Gus. I'm safe here till morning, anyway; I have completely given them the slip."

As briefly as possible Fred Howard told his story, omitting nothing from the moment of his leaving the cell upon Blackwell's Island until he had entered the room in which he found himself now.

He told Magnus Cromey of the sunken ship, with its wealth of gold; he told of the old man's fate, and of the papers which he had had thrust into his hands, and as he advanced in his tale in the darkened room, his face lighted by the glow of the little night-lamp which his friend had caused to burn, there came upon the face of the boy a look of firm determination, which told plainly that he was a boy no longer, but possessed of a soul fired with the instincts of a man.

Could his enemy have seen the look he might well have trembled.

It was the look of one to whom no obstacle in the way of accomplishing his purpose could remain long unmoved.

"Fred," said his listener, in a whisper, "this is the most wonderful thing I ever heard of. Do you know, I was just dreaming of picking up gold-pieces in the water as you awakened me with your knocking? Do you believe this strange story? Can it indeed be true?"

"Gus, I believe it fully. Here is the package, which will tell us all about it. Now, then, will you join me in seeking this hidden treasure? Will you swear to be true to me, and help me in my work of revenge against Ralph Pomeroy—to bring the murderers of my parents to justice—to solve my sister's mysterious fate?"

"I will, Fred Howard," cried the young man clasping his hand in that of his friend.

"I would do it as freely if you had not told me one word of this tale. You have been deeply wronged, old man, how deeply Heaven alone knows, and as for poor Bertha—well, you know how I loved her, and that's enough. Fred, in whatever you are about to do to right the wrong that has been done to you by that scoundrel, count Gus Ripley in every time."

"Good," replied Fred, quietly. "I expected nothing less from you, Gus, I am free to say, and that is why I came directly here. Here are the papers which I received from Magnus Cromey's dying hands. Let us read them together, that our work may be made plain."

As he spoke he drew up to the table upon which stood the lamp, and took from his pocket a small package covered with dark leather, Gus seating himself upon the opposite side.

Removing the leather covering, which was securely fastened by a number of stout cords, three pieces of yellow time-worn paper were revealed, which Fred proceeded to spread out beneath the light of the lamp.

The first was a diagram representing a portion of the southern coast of Long Island from Patchogue eastward along the Great South Bay.

Upon this were a number of figures evidently referring to some descriptive memorandum yet to come.

Laying this to one side, Fred opened the second paper, which was larger and thicker.

It proved to be a closely written document of considerable length.

As he cast his eyes upon it, Fred Howard gave vent to an exclamation of disgusted surprise.

"Why, it's in Spanish!" he exclaimed, "or some other outlandish tongue. What in the world can we do?"

"Why, read it, to be sure. Don't you know I've been studying Spanish for the last year and a half?"

"Seems to me I do remember hearing you say something of the sort, but I had no idea you had made headway enough to read a thing like this."

"But I have, though," said Gus, confidently. "Here, give me the paper—I'll see what I can do."

Taking the paper, which was written in a small cramped hand, he turned up the light and read as follows:

"First—I, Magnus Cromey, a cook of the San Cristobal, do hereby solemnly declare that of the captain, his wife and children, and the entire crew of that unfortunate vessel which was wrecked upon the south shore of Long Island, ten miles east of Patchogue, October 2, 1852, I alone was the only soul saved."

"Second—I further declare with equal solemnity that in the treasure room of that vessel, as she now lies buried in the sand, in not over eight fathoms of water, at high tide, just off the bar of the Great South Bay, are \$5,000,000 in gold bars which I saw loaded at Russian River, California, and which belonged to Captain John Hulse alone."

A YOUNG MONTE CRISTO.

"Third—That Captain Hulse and his entire family being lost in that ship, I consider that this vast treasure belongs to me only, or to whomsoever I shall choose to make the secret known in event of my death before being in position to raise the same."

"Fourth—That the ship lies at a point three cable lengths from the red buoy, s. s. c., which marks the entrance to the second channel entering Great South Bay to the eastward of Fire Island light."

"Fifth—That the accompanying papers give accurate directions for reaching this sunken treasure ship."

"Sixth—That I do most solemnly charge the person into whose hands these shall come, which will be only after I am dead, to see that solemn high mass is said for the repose of my soul, and that my body is buried in consecrated ground MAGNUS CROMETY."

"Hong Kong, China, Aug. 10, 1858."

The paper fell from the hands of Gus Ripley to the table as he finished.

"Fred, do you know what I shall call you from this time forth?"

"Gus, I can't imagine. I am too much taken up with that strange document to think or speak."

"The Young Monte Cristo, and may you live to recover this vast treasure as successfully as did Edmund Dantes that buried on the Mediterranean island, and upon that scoundrel, Ralph Pomeroy, work a full and complete revenge."

CHAPTER VI.

THE TREASURE BENEATH THE SEA.

The sun had just risen above the low sand hills upon the southern shore of Long Island, its golden radiance reflecting back from the waters of the Great South Bay, upon the morning of June 2, 1853, when a four-oared boat shot out from the mouth of a little salt creek setting back into the adjacent meadows and spun rapidly off through the dark, green waters of the bay itself.

In this boat sat two young men, or rather boys—for neither have passed the age of twenty—each pulling steadily at his pair of oars.

In the bottom of the boat lay a grapnel, a small cask of water, a basket of provisions, a shot-gun and a number of flat stones, so distributed as not to interfere with the feet of the rowers.

Both boys were clad only in shirts, trousers, stockings and shoes, with plain handkerchiefs about their necks and broad-brimmed straw hats upon their heads.

That they were not fishermen was evident, as they were unprovided with either bait or tackle; moreover, they were heading for a spot which to fish would have been difficult to find, viz., the inside line of the bar of the Great South Bay, upon which the breakers toss and foam at all stages of tide in one white, continuous line.

But the reader has probably divined the identity of these boys, even while we have wasted valuable time and space in describing their personal appearance and the nature and fitting of their craft.

It is the young Monte Cristo and his faithful friend Gus Ripley, bent upon proving the truth of the document given to Fred Howard by the dying Spanish sailor, and to locate, if possible, the wreck of the San Cristobal.

But little over a week has elapsed since the escape of Fred from Blackwell's Island, during which time he has remained concealed in the house of his friend.

During this time not a word could Gus learn of the fate of Magnus Cromety, and both boys felt that there could be little doubt that he was dead.

Such being the case, they resolved to seek out the sunken ship without further delay, and with that end in view had journeyed to Patchogue, proceeded ten miles east, and providing themselves with a suitable boat and abundant provisions at a neighboring hamlet, had thus in the early morning started out upon their search for the sunken gold.

To say that both were laboring under excitement would be to say but the simple truth.

It would be difficult to find boy or man of whom, starting out upon such a mission, could not be said the same.

But both were calm and collected for all that, and knew perfectly what they were about.

For the space of half an hour or so neither spoke a word, but pulled directly for a certain red buoy which marks the entrance to the second channel leading from the ocean to the Great South Bay to the eastward of Fire Island light.

"We are close upon it now, Gus," said Fred, at length, turning his head and surveying the scene.

"How far ahead does she lay?"

"Well, not more than a hundred yards, I should say."

"Good! Then we are almost on the ground?"

"So I should say. What bottom have we, I wonder? Hold on a moment, until I have the lead."

A piece of sheet-lead attached to a cord was let down over the side of the boat, and, bottom reached, was drawn into the boat and carefully measured with a tape.

"How do you make it, Fred?"

"Six fathoms, Gus—that's less than forty feet. I can't make it out any more."

"Do you think you are good for a dive of that depth?"

"Certainly I do, with my feet weighted. I haven't been practic-

ing for ten days for nothing. I am certain that I can do it, and so can you."

Daily for a week past had the boys been practicing deep river diving at a secluded spot upon the East river shore, weighting their feet with heavy stones, in order that they might be carried down more readily, with knife in hand, ready to sever the connecting cords at a moment's notice the instant their breath began to fail.

Both were most excellent swimmers and divers, and in the minds of both there reposed an entire confidence of success.

"I guess there's no doubt of that," replied Gus, assuredly. "If diving is all that stands in the way, you'll be the Young Monte Cristo sure."

"We'll see," said Fred. "You don't more than half believe in the existence of this sunken treasure, Gus, and I must confess in my own mind there are many doubts; but the time has come when we shall soon settle the question once and for all. See! we are abreast of the red buoy now. Which way does the paper say the wreck of the San Cristobal lies?"

"South, southcast, three cable lengths from the buoy."

"That's one hundred and fifty feet. It will bring us close on to the bar, just out of reach of the breakers."

Again the oars were plied lustily, and the required distance covered.

"Drop anchor!" cried Fred, springing to his feet and executing his own order as he spoke. "Here we are right off the bar. Great Caesar! what a noise those breakers make! There she is, Gus, and what's more, she holds."

As he spoke the boat swung round with the tide—the grapnel had buried itself in the sand.

Both boys stood up in the boat and surveyed the scene.

To the right a great white line of foam could be seen, breaking and tumbling upon the bar which divides the Great South Bay from the ocean itself. To the left the low sand dunes of the Long Island light-house, a low black line by its marking the great hotel.

The sky was perfectly clear, and the water as calm as is ever the case so near the bar.

More than this, the tide was out—no better time, no conditions for the undertaking in which they were about to embark could possibly exist.

"Gus, shall we try it now?"

"Fred, I'm ready whenever you say."

"Then I say there's no time like the present. Off with your clothes, old man, while I heave the lead again!"

"Good!" he exclaimed, as the lead-line was measured, "there's not over thirty feet of water here."

Fred hastily began to undress himself as he spoke, and a moment later stood by the side of his companion, naked, at the bow of the boat.

Attaching the weighing-stones to their feet and grasping their knives grimly in their left hands, ready upon an instant's notice to sever the cords which held them, at a signal from Fred both leaped simultaneously from the boat and sank beneath the waves.

One minute passed, then another; the head of Gus Ripley appeared above the surface, and with a few bold strokes he had gained the boat and clambered over its side.

Five seconds later, Fred likewise appeared a rod or two further away, and making the boat, well out of breath, seated himself by the side of his friend.

"Well, Gus, what did you find?"

"Nothing. I made the bottom without the least trouble in the world, and covered the space of a dozen feet or more, but couldn't discover a solitary thing."

"The same with me. There's sand down there—any amount of it; but I'm blest if I could see anything that looked like a sunken ship."

"She ought to be pretty well covered up by this time, if she's there at all. You must remember it's over thirty years since she went down."

"True; but the sand is ever shifting here on the bar. She may have been covered and uncovered again twenty times during those years for all we know. Here goes for another dive—One, two, three!"

Both leaped from the boat at the word, and in an instant had disappeared.

As the body of Fred Howard sunk lower and lower in the water, carried toward the bottom by the weight of the stone attached to his feet, his eye met an upright object not three feet away.

It rose from a little hillock of sand, around which fishes innumerable could be seen swimming.

Moving toward it, he extended his hand and touched the object, a thrill of joy as he did so filling his soul.

It was the broken mast of a vessel—there could be no doubt of that.

Even as his fingers touched the wood, his feet rested upon the hillock of sand.

With a quick movement he kicked to the right and the left, brushing the sand away.

Suddenly there gleamed among the sand the yellow sheen of gold!

Thrusting his body forward, he grasped an oblong metallic bar, but one of a pile of twenty which met his gaze.

With his prize held firmly in his right hand he severed the cord which held the stone attached to his feet with his left.

As he did so he perceived the form of Gus Ripley not three feet away.

In another instant, still holding his treasure in his hand, he had risen to the surface of the Great South Bay.

"Found!" he cried, breathlessly, as he waved the golden bar above his head, flashing its yellow glitter in the eyes of his companion, who at that moment appeared at his side.

"The treasure of the San Cristobal is found at last! the millions of this treasure ship are ours! Let Ralph Pomeroy now beware, for my work of vengeance has already begun!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE GOLD OF THE SAN CRISTOBAL SEES THE LIGHT OF DAY ONCE MORE.

With the golden bar grasped firmly in his hand, Fred Howard struck out for the boat and leaped nimbly in.

Gus Ripley followed him, striking out with the bold hand over hand stroke, and within the space of a moment had also leaped into the boat.

"Fred! What is it? What have you found?"

"No need to ask twice about that, Gus," replied the boy, calmly, at the same time extending his treasure toward his friend.

"If you doubted the truth of the story of Magnus Cromety, and the wreck of the San Cristobal before, take that in your hand and feel its weight—there's plenty more where it came from down below!"

"It's gold, sure enough! there can be no doubt of that. When and how did you find it? I'm dying to hear."

"The wreck of the San Cristobal is down there, Gus, just as the paper states. I struck the mast first, and following that down, came to the vessel itself, where, brushing away no more sand than I could easily move with my feet, the first thing I struck was this."

"Fred, it is all so wonderful that it fairly takes my breath away. We read of such things in story books, but who would ever imagine they could happen to us? There's no doubt but this is gold straight enough?"

"Not the least in the world," replied Fred, taking the bar into his hand again and examining it closely. "Its weight tells the story, if nothing else, and see—here is the assayer's stamp."

A number of letters were to be seen punched upon the surface of the bar, which was oblong in shape, and about ten inches in length, three in width, and more than an inch in thickness.

"Augustus Humbert, Assayer, San Francisco, Nov. 10th, 1851, 900 fine," was the way it read.

"That proves it, Gus," said our hero, quietly. "Every word of that paper is true; there can be no doubt of it. There's millions in that old hulk below the water there, and all for us, if we can only raise it, and I'm willing to take the chances on that."

"How much do you think that bar is worth?"

"I should say a thousand dollars at least."

"And according to that, there must be five thousand more of them, if your old Spaniard told the truth. Great Caesar, Fred, that's money enough to buy the whole world!"

"Not quite," answered Fred, with a smile; "but there is all we want, Gus, and to spare, to carry out my purpose, and to give us every possible luxury as long as we live. But the question arises right here, does it belong to us? Ought we take possession of this without even an attempt to find the right heirs?"

"But the paper states they are all dead?"

"True—but, then, the papers may not state the truth. To be sure, my acquaintance with the old sailor was not sufficiently intimate to make me know just how much conscience he possessed, but I doubt very much if he ever made any vigorous attempt to find the heirs of Captain Hulse."

"And shall you? It seems to me if we go to all the trouble and expense of raising this gold—and it's going to be not child's play, I want you to understand—it ought to belong entirely to us—that is, to you."

"To us both, Gus, if either of us. We are partners in this whole matter. Don't for a moment think that I would try to get the best of you, and do you out of your share of the treasure, now that it is actually found. As for the heirs of Captain Hulse, we will raise the gold first and think about them later on. We are just at the threshold of our fortune now, and there's many a slip, you know, which may come between us and complete success. But we've wasted time enough in talk; the tide has turned—what do you say for another dive and a closer inspection of our find?"

"I'm ready any time, Fred."

Arranging the weighting stones as before, the boys stood upright in the boat, Fred at the bow, Gus at the stern.

"One! two! three! Let her go!"

Quick as a flash the athletic forms of the two young divers had disappeared beneath the surface again, the little boat rocking violently upon the waters of the Great South Bay with the impetus given it by their departing feet.

The direction taken by the boys at this dive was not at fault.

Within the space of a few seconds they stood upon the deck of the wrecked vessel again.

The disturbance created in the little hillock of sand by Fred upon his first visit had not been without effect, and a portion of the deck now lay exposed to view.

Scattered around upon it lay a number of oblong boxes, which, in spite of the fact that the vessel lay slightly upon its side, in-

clined at an angle of perhaps fifteen degrees, still maintained their position upon the deck.

They were constructed of a peculiar reddish kind of wood, which, had the boys been better informed, they would have at once recognized as the California redwood, being the same as that of the celebrated "big trees" of the Calaveras group.

The long action of the water upon this wood, instead of preserving its texture, as is the case with cedar, cypress, and various other growths, had served to rot it, and a few smart blows with the weighting stone which Fred had carried down with him upon his first visit, and which still lay upon the deck, served to break open their rotting covers as easily as though made of so much punk.

Not over a minute and a half had elapsed before the contents of at least five of the boxes, beside the one already broken, were fully exposed to view.

Although speech was, of course, impossible, the look of triumph which passed between the boys told plainly the thoughts of each.

The boxes were filled with golden bars like the one in the boat above.

The yellow surface of hundreds of specimens of the precious freight of the San Cristobal were now exposed to their wondering gaze.

Severing the weighting stones, each seized a bar—to rise with a greater number would not have been possible—and within the lapse of a few seconds were scrambling into the boat again.

The bars were identical with the first in every particular.

The existence of the treasure of the San Cristobal had passed from the realm of possibilities into the clear light of an accomplished fact.

"Here goes for another dive, Gus," cried our hero, springing to his feet again the instant he had recovered his breath. "And this ax goes with us this time. Before we call this day's work done I'm bound to break in the hatch of that old craft, and see what lies below."

Seizing the ax, which lay in the bottom of the boat as he spoke, Fred took a bold header from the bow of the boat again, Gus Ripley following from the stern.

To reach the deck of the sunken ship had now become a matter of little difficulty, and in less than a minute Fred stood upon it, raining blows upon the main hatch, which he had before observed plainly exposed to view among the treasure boxes strewn around.

Evidently the boxes had been brought on deck with the view of throwing them overboard in order to lighten the ship—hence the position in which they now were found.

But the hatch proved to be made of tougher material. Instead of the soft redwood, it was of solid oak.

Twice the boys were obliged to rise to the surface before the wood yielded to the blows of the ax.

Success crowned their efforts at last, however, and the open hatch stood exposed to view.

With beating hearts they leaned over the opening and peered down into the depths of the vessel's hold.

The water was there, as everywhere, and even the sand in some mysterious way had succeeded in penetrating the hold, though not in sufficient quantities to conceal the nature of the cargo the ill-fated ship had borne.

There, piled up tier upon tier, were the redwood boxes, each and every one, beyond the shadow of a doubt, filled with golden bars, as were those upon the deck upon which they stood.

For one moment the boys gazed upon the golden treasure, when Fred, severing the weighting stone with his knife, and seizing another of the precious bars from the broken boxes upon the deck, made an upward motion with his hands.

They shot upward to the surface of the water—they gained the boat once more.

"It is done!" cried the boy, flinging his bar with the others in the bottom of the boat and seizing his companion by the hand. "The treasure of the San Cristobal has seen the light of day at last; \$5,000,000 in gold are ours!"

CHAPTER VIII.

POMEROY & CO. RECEIVE A NEW DEPOSITOR.

The suddenness with which Pomeroy & Co. had blossomed into life had, in the business world which centers around Wall street, been for more than a year the one subject of conversation in every one's mouth.

In 1881 Ralph Pomeroy was just nobody at all, being nothing more than a clerk for the then rich real-estate operator, Samuel Howard, whose brutal murder and that of his wife created such a stir at the time it had occurred, at a salary which, although perhaps liberal enough as far as it went, was by no means adequate to keep up the reckless style of living which the man maintained.

In 1882, by some unknown means, Pomeroy became possessed of all his former employer's real-estate, the family mansion in Fifth avenue, stores on Broadway, stores on Grand street, and other valuable buildings in various parts of the town, and establishing himself as a broker, had bought a seat upon the Stock Exchange, and began transacting business upon his own account.

Now all this caused sufficient talk, it is true, and there were many ugly rumors afloat as to the manner in which the broker came into possession of his newly-acquired wealth; but the interest felt in his affairs was as nothing to that displayed at the begin-

A YOUNG MONTE CRISTO.

ning of 1883, when the man established himself as a private banker in an elegant suite of offices upon Wall street, just below Broad, and displayed the sign "Pomeroy & Co., Bankers," above his door.

By what means Ralph Pomeroy had suddenly acquired wealth no one knew, and, so long as the world could be actually assured he had it, no one cared.

A bold operator in stock and real estate, civil and polite in his address to those whom he chose to favor, the business of this newcomer in the banking world increased with the most extraordinary rapidity; every scheme in which he invested, every undertaking in which he embarked, seemingly yielded gold to his touch.

Now in this world it is common saying, and one likewise true, that "nothing succeeds like success."

Ralph Pomeroy had succeeded with a rapidity unparalleled in the annals of the "street," and in less than a year's time Pomeroy & Co. had taken place among the leading bankers of New York.

Upon the morning of the 15th of August, 1884, Ralph Pomeroy was late in arriving at the bank.

It was fully noon when he entered its doors and passed haughtily through the elegantly fitted counting-room, with its mahogany desks, its carved partitions and solid brass railings, and entered his private office beyond.

From the expression of his face it was evident that the great banker was in no very pleasant mood.

He laid aside his hat, and seating himself at his desk with a dissatisfied air, began to open his morning mail.

"Confound it!" he muttered, as he tore open letter after letter and hastily scanned their contents. "I had set my heart upon that span of horses, Rarus and Lady Betty, and now here steps in this mysterious individual and snaps them up under my very nose at double the price I offered to pay. The horses are valuable, it is true, but they are not worth no twenty thousand apiece, and yet that is the sum given by this man, Hazelwood, whom nobody knows, or seems to have even heard of before. I wonder—Hello! what in the world is this? A written communication from Clemmons & Co., stating that the block of Elevated Railway stock upon which I expected to turn half a million has passed at a better price into other hands! Was there ever anything so confoundedly unlucky! The fates seem against me to-day!"

Dashing the letter angrily to the desk, the banker rose, and entering the closet which contained his private telephone, rung the bell with an angry jerk.

"Give me Clemmons & Co.," he shouted through the instrument, in no pleasant tone.

A moment of silence followed.

Then the telephone bell tinkled again.

"Is this Clemmons & Co.?"

From over the wire came the distant reply:

"Yes. Who are you?"

"This is Pomeroy & Co. I am Mr. Pomeroy. I want to talk with Mr. Clemmons."

"All right; Mr. Clemmons is here."

"How about that Manhattan Elevated stock, Clemmons?"

"Sold, as I wrote you."

The reply that came over the wire was disgustingly plain.

"But you promised it to me."

"Can't help it. Got a better offer. Had to let it go."

"Who is your purchaser?"

"Tain't business, but I don't mind telling you. Name of Hazelwood. Rich young Englishman, just arrived in New York in his yacht, the Justice."

The banker hung up the receiver of the telephone with a vicious bang, and striding to the desk again, flung himself into his chair.

"Hazelwood again!" he muttered, angrily. "That person seems ubiquitous to-day. There's half a million gone that lay right in the palm of my hand, as one might say, with nothing to do but to shut my fingers upon it and make it my own."

He rang the little call-bell upon his desk as he spoke, and an obsequious clerk instantly appeared.

"Murray, be good enough to step down to Mr. Reimers' office and tell him privately that I have found a customer for his property on Broadway. Ask him to step around and we'll close the transaction at once."

"Very good, sir," replied the clerk, hurrying away.

In addition to his banking business, Ralph Pomeroy still handled large blocks of real estate—a business which he thoroughly understood—scarce a month passing that some valuable building did not pass through his hands, greatly to the profit of his private purse.

"No chance for interference this time," he muttered, as he threw himself back in his chair, and began to read the report of the previous day's transactions upon the Stock Exchange.

"There isn't a soul outside of this office and Reimers himself who can by any possibility be aware that I'm after that property at all, and what is more, there's fifty thousand dollars in the transaction for me."

For the space of ten minutes he continued to read in silence, when the clerk suddenly appeared again and alone.

"Well, where's Reimers?" asked the banker, looking up. "Did you see him? What did he say?"

"He sent you this note, sir."

Hastily tearing open the envelope which the clerk now extended, he read as follows:

"RALPH POMEROY, ESQ.

"My Dear sir.—Very sorry, but have had a much better offer for Broadway property. Closed with an English gentleman—a Mr.

Hazelwood—yesterday evening after I saw you at figures away in advance of yours. Sorry to disappoint you.

Yours,

REIMERS."

"Ten thousand furies!" cried the banker, stamping his foot with rage, and tearing the note into a dozen pieces. "This man Hazelwood has crossed my path again. Who is this mysterious Englishman, Murray—he seems to be a perfect Croesus, buying up everything he can lay his hands on, right and left?"

"Don't know, sir," replied the clerk. "I heard that he arrived here the other day in his yacht, and is worth millions. He lives aboard of her now, and she's lying off the Battery in the bay. They say he's fitting up a perfect palace on the avenue, sir, just below your house. I suppose you know, sir, that we received a private dispatch this morning from Trueman & Co., of London, recommending him to us?"

"No, indeed. I have been so annoyed with my private affairs this morning that I have not looked into the day's business at all. Well, that's not so bad. As he seems rolling in wealth, we may make money out of him before we get through, though how he found out about that Reimers affair—"

"Mr. Hazelwood, of London."

The sentence remained unfinished.

Even as the words rested upon the banker's lips upon the door of the private office there came a knock by the clerk in attendance, and a young and elegantly dressed gentleman was ushered into the presence of the head of the firm of Pomeroy & Co.

He was a tall, athletic fellow, in point of age certainly not over twenty-two or three.

His features were handsome and regular, his hair black, his cheeks fairly bronzed by long contact with the sun. The lower portion of his face was concealed by a dark silky beard.

His manners, which were those of a thorough gentleman, as well as his dress, were English to a degree.

"I have the pleasure of addressing Mr. Pomeroy, I presume?" he said, advancing toward the banker gravely. "Allow me to present my credentials from Trueman & Co., my London bankers, as I desire to enter a deposit with your house to a considerable amount."

"Be seated, sir," said the banker, rising and bowing obsequiously. "I have come to New York to remain, Mr. Pomeroy, and I desire to do my banking business through you. I wish to deposit a letter of credit for \$100,000 now."

"We are highly honored, Mr. Hazelwood. Anything I can do for you in the way of introduction to society, or advice as to the market, I—"

"I have no use for the former. I don't go into society at all. As to the letter, I shall be happy to avail myself of it. I am a bold speculator, Mr. Pomeroy, and propose to try my hand in New York before I've done."

Ralph Pomeroy regarded the speaker narrowly, and for a moment did not reply.

Something about his voice seemed to strike a familiar chord in his memory.

Surely at some time in the past he had heard that voice before?

As he fixed his gaze upon him, the young Englishman rose to his feet.

"I presume we may consider the matter settled," he said, taking up his hat. "You act as my banker until further notice."

"By all means, my dear sir. Must you go so soon? I would have liked to have inquired more particularly concerning our good friend Trueman—to have had you lunch with me, but I trust before many days I shall have the pleasure of meeting you again."

Again the banker extended his hand.

Oblivious to that trifling fact before, Mr. Hazelwood of London was equally so now.

With a polite bow, he had passed from the banking house of Pomeroy & Co. to the street, leaving his letter of credit for the round sum of \$100,000 behind.

Springing into an elegant coupe in waiting at the door, he flung himself back among the cushions and was driven rapidly up Wall street toward Broadway.

CHAPTER IX.

A FIND—A BRAVE ACTION.

Once give a house a bad name, even in a great city like New York, and it is apt to cling to it for all time to come.

Such was the case with the little cottage on East 108th street, Harlem, the scene of the mysterious double murder of the ruined real estate operator—Samuel Howard and his wife, with the description of which our story began.

But in this case there was a reason for the ill-favored reputation which the house still bore, and a very good reason, too.

From that day to the day of which we now write the house had remained tightly closed, and in precisely the same condition in which it had been found upon the night when the tragedy was discovered.

Upon the evening of August 15, 1884, the same day which had witnessed the extensive deposit of young Mr. Hazelwood's in Pomeroy & Co.'s Wall street bank, a young man, plainly dressed, might have been seen hurrying down 108th street at a trifle before eight o'clock.

He was tall and well-built, with black hair and beard, and face well browned with the sun.

A YOUNG MONTE CRISTO.

9

It would have needed but one glance from the eye of that most respectable of bankers to have identified him as his new depositor, the wealthy young Englishman, at once.

As he approached the house his pace seemed to slacken—he showed positive reluctance as he ascended the steps and inserted the key in the keyhole of that door, which, so far as was known, had not been opened in over a year.

"It is hard to do it," he muttered to himself, as he moved the rusted lock; "but still it must be done. Since that fatal night which deprived me of father, mother, sister, and even liberty itself, I have never entered these walls. The time when I can act freely has come at last. In spite of my personal feelings, I must revisit this scene of horror, and search for a clew to enable me to begin my work."

The door creaked upon its hinges, opened, and the speaker stood within the deserted house.

Closing the door carefully behind him, he lighted a singular-looking taper, which he produced from his pocket, and entered the main room.

A damp and moldy smell pervaded the place. Upon the carpet, furniture, pictures, and even the walls themselves, the dust lay to the depth of half an inch at least.

Crossing the apartment with hesitating step, the young man paused before the door of the room beyond.

"How can I enter it?" he murmured, a shudder passing through his frame. "And yet I must—I must search that room which contained all my dear father's private papers from end to end. To stand upon the scene of that terrible tragedy again is horrible—horrible! Nevertheless, I must do it for the sake of the dead."

He strode across the room as he spoke, and paused before a tall, old-fashioned secretary which stood against the wall.

Producing a number of keys from his pocket, he opened one by one its many doors, examining carefully letters, papers and documents thrust into pigeon-holes, and lying within a number of small drawers.

"There is a secret door here somewhere," he murmured at last, lighting a fresh taper as he spoke. "I remember it well, when once as a boy I discovered the spring."

"Where was it? To the best of my recollection, it ought to be behind this bit of molding, here!"

He ran his hand carefully up and down two exquisitely molded pillars as he spoke, which occupied the center of the desk.

As he did so a sudden click was heard, and the back of the desk, for the space of a foot or more, moved slowly forward, revealing a space within.

With a cry of joy the young man thrust his hand into the aperture thus disclosed, and drew forth a sealed packet.

"Found at last!" he exclaimed, joyfully, as he held it up to the light. "I'll not attempt to read it here—that sad duty shall be reserved for a time when I am more calm."

He thrust it into his pocket as he spoke, having glanced at the words upon it by the feeble light of the taper.

They were written in a bold, firm hand, and read thus:

"To Fred Howard, my only son, to be opened at my death."

Fred Howard!

Was the rich Mr. Hazelwood, the newly arrived Englishman, whose arrival in his elegant steam yacht, the Justice, had taken the town by storm, and the bare-footed, half-naked convict lad, who had crouched on the rocks off Blackwell's Island upon that night more than a year before, one and the same?

If so, the visitor to this abode of death said nothing to reveal the fact, for even as he secreted the packet about his person he hurriedly left the house, and, fastening the door behind him, walked rapidly, and without a word, toward Third avenue, and boarding an elevated train, seated himself in one corner of the hindermost car, and was borne rapidly down-town.

At the terminus of the road he alighted, and descending the steps, crossed the Battery and moved slowly along the sea-wall of that well-known park, with his eyes fixed out upon the bay.

Paying no attention to these sights at all, the young man drew from his pocket an ivory whistle, and blew three times upon it in a peculiar way.

In a moment an answering whistle was heard, and from an elegant yacht lying out in the stream a small boat was launched and was seen to pull for the shore.

For a moment the giver of the signal watched it, and at length, as it drew nearer, sauntered slowly along the sea-wall toward the great stone pier beyond the public bath.

As he did so, his attention was suddenly attracted by the figure of a young and exceedingly beautiful girl, who stood leaning over the chains which protect the wall from the waters of the bay.

She was poorly dressed—in fact, her clothes were little better than rags—while upon her face, mingling with an air of ladylike refinement, was a pinched, starved expression pitiful to see.

For an instant the young man hesitated. Then thrusting his hand into his pocket as though about to tender alms, he turned in the direction of the spot where she stood.

Suddenly, and without the slightest warning, the girl darted over the chains and leaped into the water beyond.

"Suicide! Suicide! She's drowned herself!"

Thus the cry went up, but not a man among the entire crowd moved so much as one finger to save the life of the misguided girl.

Wretched though it might be, it was still a life to be saved.

At that same instant there dashed among the excited throng a young man with bronzed features and manly, athletic form.

Without a word he flung aside his coat, hat, and shoes, and leaped boldly into the waters of the bay.

CHAPTER X.

MR. DYNAMITE DOVE STRIKES AN HONEST JOB.

"Hello, there, abroad the boat?"

"Hello, yerself, and see how you like it—what are you after wanting wid an honest man?"

"Do you want a job that'll pay you five dollars, providing you can forget all about it if anyone should happen to be curious about it after it is done?"

"Faix, an' I do, providin' it's honest; let's see the color of yer money, mister, an' I'll tell you whether me memory is short or long."

"Then bring your boat around the pler into the slip. I'll drop into her, and we can talk unobserved."

It was a tall, heavily-bearded man, dressed in the rough garb of a sailor, who spoke. It was a good-natured looking Irishman rowing a dirty black boat in his shirt sleeves opposite the end of Pier 5, North river, to whom his remarks were addressed.

Pulling around the end of the pler, the boatman entered the slip, and shooting dexterously between the stern of a small steamer on one hand and the end of a coal barge on the other, drew up alongside the piers.

The man who had halled him was already there.

With the agility of an old sailor he clambered over the side of the pier and leaped into the boat.

"Now, thin, neighbor," said the boatman, regarding him curiously as he maintained his position close against the spiles, "before we go any further, what kind of a job is it that ye have on hand, for it must be honest, or Dan Dove will have nothing to do wid it at all, at all."

"Is that so?" replied the man, carelessly. "Well, there's nothing dishonest in what I want. Do you see that yacht lying out there in the stream?"

"I do that, an' it's a beauty she is. What of her? Is it on board of her ye're wishing to go?"

"It is. Do you know who she belongs to?"

"I do that—she's the Justice, what come to this port a week ago with a young English snob, named Hazelwood, aboard. Bad cess to him, an' to all others of his race! Sure, an' it's the likes of him a-gallivantin' around the world in their yachts wld the money wrung from their poor tlntry that makes ould Ireland what it is."

As he gave vent to his sentiments to the stranger, who had entered his boat, the countenance of that individual—what could be distinguished of it above the thick mass of beard which covered his face—relaxed for an instant into a smile.

"Then row me out to the Justice, my man," he said, handing the boatman a five-dollar bill, "and I've another just like this for you when I step on shore."

"All right, boss; whatever game ye have in hand is no concern of mine, but mind, now, it must be an honest job, or Dan Dove will have naught to do with it at all."

He moved out into the river as he spoke, and heading his boat for the yacht, pulled lustily away.

"Here ye are," he said at length, as the boat drew near the yacht, the outlines of whose hull were just visible in the darkness, above which rose the masts with the usual lights displayed. "Yon's the Justice, mister. Shall I hail her, that you may go aboard?"

"No, don't hail her. Row round her stern. I want to see what kind of a craft she is."

But why did the mysterious person come out simply to visit this yacht at a time like this?

This was precisely what Mr. Dynamite Dove, river speculator, began to feel that he would like to know, for, as his passenger still sat peering off in the darkness at the dainty craft, the rain began to fall in torrents, wetting the worthy disciple of O'Donovan Rossa completely to the skin.

"Come, come, boss," he exclaimed, grumbly. "I don't understand this sort of thng at all, at all. If you wsh to go aboard, sure I'll take ye there. If it's to the shore ye'd go, let's be after goin' at wanst, for I'm not disposed for a duckin' to-night, havin' rheumatiz in the bones."

"Just so. Well, I think I've continued my little excursion long enough. Pull for the shore as soon as you please. By the way, Mr. Dove—I believe that's what you call yourself—suppose you pull close under the stern there. I see the lookout's at the bow; perhaps I might get a peep at her interior fittings through that open cabin window. I see it is not higher than my head as I stand up in the boat."

"Faix, an' I'm thinking it's a loonatic I'm after hirng meself to," muttered the river speculator, as he pulled under the stern of the yacht. "What the mischief he can want to come out here in a storm like this, just for the satisfaction of looking at yon craft in the darkness, is more than I can see! Here ye are, neighbor; ye is as near as ye'll get—Begorra, and if ye ain't takin' in the boat's cabin through the window now!"

He had raised his eyes toward his strange passenger as he muttered these words.

The man had risen to his feet, and grasping the rudder chain of the yacht with his left hand, was peering in at the open dead-light window, which was just on a line with his head.

A YOUNG MONTE CRISTO.

Now, Mr. Dynamite Dove had turned his head to the left as he spoke, with an uneasy glance at the black clouds in the West.

As he did so a more than usually sharp flash of lightning had broken upon the scene, illuminating the surface of the water, the yacht, the surrounding vessels, and the shore beyond with a white, unearthly glare.

It was but for the space of an instant, but in that instant the sharp eyes of the river speculator espied what seemed to be a well-filled pocket-book of the larger sort, bobbing up and down upon the surface of the waves, within easy reach of his outstretched hand.

Hastily slipping the oars, he forgot for the instant his singular passenger, and leaning over the side of the boat, stretched out his hand to grasp the floating prize.

Even as he did so a deafening peal of thunder was heard, which would have put a park of artillery to shame, mingled with which was a sound strangely like a pistol shot, directly over his head, and before Mr. Dynamite Dove had time to draw back into the boat he suddenly felt himself seized by a strong hand from behind, and flung headlong in the darkness into the turbulent waves.

CHAPTER XI.

THE RESCUE—AN UNEXPECTED LOSS.

As the youthful yacht-owner leaped from the sea-wall of the Battery to the rescue of the drowning girl, there went up from the crowd an admiring shout.

With a few bold strokes he had reached the form of the sinking girl, and grasped her firmly around the waist.

"Courage, young lady! courage!" he shouted. "Is there nothing for you in life that you would seek to end it by this rash act?"

"Let me die—let me die! I can keep up the fight no longer. Why does anyone try to stop me when I only wish to die—only to die?"

It was the piteous wail of one thoroughly weary of the world.

But the young man paid no more attention to the words than if they had never been uttered.

Throwing himself upon his back in the water, and holding the form of the drowning girl firmly against his own body in such a manner that, in spite of her struggles, it was impossible for her to free herself, he gave with his lips that peculiar whistle again.

At the same instant the sound of oars was heard, and a boat manned by several young men in yachtmen's shirts shot rapidly toward the scene.

"Here, you, Bill and Tom! take this young lady into the boat." It was the swimmer who spoke—the boat had reached his side. Instantly four strong arms had relieved him of his burden, and had drawn her into the boat.

Still another instant, and he was seated at her side.

"Get my coat and hat, one of you," said the young man, shaking the water from his dripping form, and seating himself in the stern with perfect coolness, "and then be off for the yacht."

"But this lady, captain—" said one of the rowers, touching his hat, with a doubtful glance at the girl who lay unconscious in the bottom of the boat, her head resting upon a cushion taken from one of the seats.

"Take her along—the doctor will attend to her."

"Very good, sir, here's your coat and hat. We'll be on board the Justice in just no time at all."

The boat had been guided beneath the Battery wall as the man had spoken, where a dozen willing hands stood ready to pass the hat and coat of the brave youth aboard.

Without heeding the congratulatory remarks showered upon him from every side, the commander of the Justice reiterated the order for instant departure. The boat shot rapidly through the waters of the bay, and in a few moments came alongside an elegant steam-yacht riding at anchor out in the stream.

Evidently their approach had been seen by those on board, for at the same instant a ship's ladder was lowered by order of a young man, who now approached the side of the craft, being seemingly in command.

"Is that you, Fred?"

"No one else, Gus. Lend a hand here; we've got a young lady aboard. She's just tried to drown herself by jumping into the bay."

He raised the fainting form of the unhappy girl as he spoke. She rested wholly unconscious in his arms.

Willing hands were extended in assistance, and a moment later, all wet and dripping, their fair burden was laid tenderly upon a couch in the little cabin, in the care of a motherly colored woman, evidently the stewardess, and a young physician, who appeared to be likewise attached to the yacht.

"Will she live, doctor?" asked the orner, addressing the young physician who bent over the unconscious girl.

"I think so, Mr. Hazelwood. In fact, I'm sure of it. See, she revives now."

The beautiful eyes, shrouded by long lashes, had opened even as he spoke.

Slowly they wandered from one face to another of those who bent over her, an expression of indescribable weariness was seen to overspread her countenance, while from her lips there escaped a long-drawn sigh.

"Oh! why have you brought me here?" she murmured, faintly. "I wanted to end it all—to die, only to die."

"Take heart, young lady," he said, gently and respectfully. "Whatever the past may have been for you, take the word of one who has also suffered, that the future may still have much in store. You are among friends here, and will receive every care; moreover, you are free to leave my yacht whenever you may wish to do so. Everything on board is at your disposal, and Mrs. Brown, here, will attend to you now."

He bowed politely as he spoke, and, drawing his friend away, passed to an inner cabin in the stern of the boat, leaving her to the care of the doctor and the stewardess alone.

The inner cabin of the Justice was a model of artistic design.

Finished in hard wood highly polished, the floor covered with soft Persian rugs, and lighted by a large lamp of hammered brass, it presented a scene of cheerful luxuriance exceedingly pleasing to the eye.

To these surroundings Fred Howard paid no attention at all—evidently they possessed no novelty for him.

"Gus!" he exclaimed, the instant the door dividing the cabins closed behind him, "did you ever see a more beautiful face in your life?"

"She's beautiful, Fred, that is certain, though I can hardly go as far as that. How in the world did it all come about? Tell me, for I'm dying to know."

"Why, she jumped in the bay from off the Battery wall, and I fished her out. I know no more than that. But I'm certain of one thing—she's good, however wretched her life may have been. One glance at her face is enough to tell anyone that."

"She certainly looks so. We will know all about it soon. But how has the day gone? Did you see your enemy? Did you search the old house?"

"Both one and the other, Gus. With Ralph Pomeroy I got on finely. He has no more idea who I am than if he had never seen me in his life before."

"Don't be too sure of that—the man is shrewd."

"I know it, but I am sure, nevertheless. We shall learn the secret power that villain held over my poor father now. Look, Gus; in my search through the old house, see what I have found. A sealed packet addressed by my father's own hand to me."

He thrust his hand into the inner pocket of his vest as he spoke, with the confident air of one who has an important disclosure to make.

As he did so his face turned as pale as death.

"Merciful Heaven!" he exclaimed, in a frightened whisper. "I have lost it, Gus—I've lost it! The packet is gone!"

CHAPTER XII.

SHOT BY AN UNKNOWN.

"Gone!" cried Gus Ripley, springing forward at the words uttered by his friend. "Surely you don't mean the packet you found in the old house?"

"That's just what I mean, Gus," replied Fred Howard, an expression of intense vexation overspreading his face. "It's gone, and with it the whole key to Ralph Pomeroy's villainy, and my dead father's last commands."

He entered his private state-room as he spoke, while Gus Ripley summoned the steward of the yacht.

A cozy little table was drawn out from the extreme stern of the craft, upon which was spread a snow-white cloth, silver and fine china in profusion.

A moment later Fred issued from his room, carefully dressed in an evening suit, seated himself upon one side of the table, with his back turned toward the stern-light, which, as the evening was decidedly oppressive, was open for air, Gus taking his seat upon the opposite side.

Touching a bell, the steward again appeared, followed by two colored servants, who placed upon the table a repast fit for the veriest gourmand in the land.

Truly, the gold of the San Cristobal had not been rescued from the depths of the ocean for naught.

With a wave of the hand the Young Monte Cristo dismissed the attendants.

Serving the various dishes himself, the repast was begun, the boys conversing as they proceeded with their meal.

"I've begun it, Gus," said our hero, as he carved a joint of prime roast beef. "My work of revenge is fairly begun. Already, by means of secret information furnished me by one of his own trusted employees, I've balked Ralph Pomeroy in three of his schemes, and turned from his pocket into mine a round half million at least."

"I'm with you heart and soul, Fred. You know that, old man. But what of poor Bertha? Did you learn nothing of her?"

"Not a word. The detectives are completely baffled. If the earth had opened and swallowed her up upon that fatal day, she could not have disappeared more effectually than she has. They have been searching for her in every direction for the past six months—ever since we turned our golden bars into cash in London, in fact—but not the slightest trace of her can they find."

"Poor girl, poor girl!" said Gus, with a sigh. "I would willingly give my share of all this wealth that you have so generously bestowed upon me, Fred, if I could only solve the mystery of her fate."

"And I'd give ten times as much, Gus; but don't talk of my generosity to you. Why, if it hadn't been for your brain and the weeks of unremitting toil at your hands, I doubt seriously if I should have succeeded in raising that gold at all."

"Pshaw! you did as much as I."

The entrance of the steward put an end, for the moment, to the conversation between the friends.

Meanwhile, through the open light behind our hero could be distinguished the signs of a gathering storm.

The sky in the west had assumed an inky blackness, thunder could be heard growling ominously, and at short intervals sharp flashes of lightning broke upon the waters of the bay.

Meanwhile the motion of the yacht became greater, as she moved up and down upon the surface of the waves.

"Here's success to our undertakings, Fred," cried Gus, raising to his lips a glass of rare old claret, as the steward again left them alone. "Keep a cool head and a steady hand, and we'll solve those mysteries yet."

"I drink to that with all my heart," replied the young Monte Cristo, raising his glass to his lips. "Already my work of vengeance has begun. Ralph Pomeroy has been struck by a hand he little dreams!"

As the boys touched the glasses to their lips a deafening clap of thunder caused the yacht to tremble from stem to stern.

At the same instant the sharp crack of a pistol was heard even above the rattling of the thunder itself.

With a sudden exclamation of pain the wine glass fell from Gus Ripley's hand and broke in a thousand pieces on the table before him.

"My Heaven! Fred, I'm shot!"

From the pallid lips of the unfortunate youth the cry went forth.

He leaped to his feet—staggered wildly for a single moment—and then fell bleeding to the cabin floor!

CHAPTER XIII.

A SECOND RESCUE—A SURPRISE.

With a cry of horror at the fall of Gus Ripley, Fred Howard dashed his glass to the floor and sprang to the side of his friend.

"Gus, Gus! are you hurt, old man?"

That shot had entered through the open dead-light window of the yacht, beyond which the rain could now be heard pouring in torrents, there could not be a doubt.

Quickly as a flash Fred Howard sprang to the open dead light and thrust his head out into the storm.

He understood but too plainly that the shot fired from a pistol held in an unknown hand had never been intended for the man whose body had received it, but for himself, and no one else.

The secret enemy of his unfortunate family had attempted to strike a final blow, and blot the last of the Howards from the face of the earth.

As Fred was about to draw in his head, and, hastening to the outer cabin beyond, summon the young physician whom he had attached to his yacht in aid of his wounded companion, he thought he could distinguish a faint cry for help coming from out of the surrounding darkness—out of the water itself.

He listened.

Through the rain and wind the cry was repeated.

"Help! help! help! Will no one help a drowning man?"

Even as the cry reached the yacht a vivid flash of lightning illuminated the scene.

There, not fifty feet away from the Justice, rowing against the wind and tide, the figure of a man could be distinctly seen seated in a small black boat.

Fred laid Gus in a stateroom, called the doctor, and, calling Tom and Bill, lowered a boat and rowed toward the place where Fred had seen the boat. Instead of the boat they saw a man in the water.

In less than a moment they had reached him, and leaning over the side of the boat, with a strong hand Fred drew his dripping form aboard.

"Well, my friend, you had a close call there," he said, quietly, as the stranger sank exhausted into the bottom of the boat.

He was a rough-looking character enough, without a coat or hat—a heavy red beard covered the lower part of his face.

In the darkness more than this could not be seen, as the rescued man lay at their feet gasping for breath.

For an instant he did not speak. Then with a faint gasp he raised his hand and pointed frantically toward the New York shore.

"There he goes! the spalpeen!" he cried, in a rich Irish brogue; "there he goes, an' in me own boat too! Sure, gintlemin, it's murder that he came out to do, but, as the saints hear me, sorra a hard did I have in it at all, at all!"

"Speak!" cried Fred, seizing the man by the arm. "Were you in that boat?—there was a shot fired through the stern-light of yonder yacht—do you—"

"Do I know who fired it? Faith, an' I do. It was the dirty bound that cheked me overboard from me own boat, so it was! There he goes, gintlemin; maybe yer eyesight ain't as good as me own in the dark—don't yez see him, right over there? Och! ye dirty blackguard! but it's meself that'll take it out of yer hide!"

As the speaker ceased, Fred Howard darted toward him a look of wonder and surprise.

"Hello! neighbor, we've met before, it seems!" he cried. "It strikes me I've paid my debt to you now! Have you forgotten the boy you pulled out of the East river. Unless I am greatly mistaken, your name is Dove!"

He eyed our hero from head to foot, a cunning look overspread his face.

"Arrah, and it's playin' wid a half-drowned man ye are," he exclaimed, "although, be the same token, it wud be a difficult matter to drown an ould wather-dog like meself, for I'm none the worse for me bath at all, an' could have kept up another hour as airy as though lyin' on me own feather bed at home. My name is Dove, an' I don't deny it. By me frinds I'm called 'Dynamite Dove,' because I always have the cause of ould Ireland forinst me heart; but sorra a reecollection do I have of yez, me young gintlemin, although it's much obliged to you I am for pullin' me out of the wather, all the same."

"What!" cried Fred, throwing a meaning glance at the carsman, "don't you remember a little trip you took one night in May, a year ago? You had two bags of sugar aboard. I had jumped into the water for an evening swim, and—"

"Sure, I remember ye now," interrupted the Irishman.

For a moment the wily river speculator remained silent.

That in pursuit of his "honest job" he had got himself into what, in his own graphic language, he would have termed a "nasty hole," he began to see plainly—the best way out was clearly to confess.

"Do you come from yon steam yacht?" he said at length, ignoring the question put to him entirely.

"I do. I'm her owner."

"The deuce you are! Do you mean to be affer telling me that ye are the rich Englishman Hazelwood?"

"I am Mr. Hazelwood, Dove, and at your service, I hope. You did me a good turn once, and I want to do the same by you. If you will be frank with me. Who fired that shot, and why? You say it was the man in yonder boat, which, thank Heaven, we are gainng on every moment. Who is he? What's his name?"

"Faith, lad, an' that's more than I can tell you. Be frank, say you! Thank Hlven, there's naught in me life that I'd not confess freely to any mon on earth, barring a little taste of sugar wanst in a while, an' ould ropes' ends, or the likes of that. That dlrthy blackguard, whom I don't know from a side of sole leather, haled me as I was pulling along quietly in me boat."

"I want to go out to the Justice," says he, "and it's five dollars I'll give yez to pull me over."

"All right," says I, and pull him over I did, when, instead of goin' aboard to see yer honor, as I supposed his object was, what does he do but pop off his gun through the cabin light, and chuck me overboard into the bay for me palms."

"And is that all you know?" cried Fred, in great astonishment. It was evident the man had spoken the truth.

"Every whit. May I die if I haven't towld the truth!"

"What kind of looking man was he?"

"Oh, a rough sailor-like chap, wld a blg blaek beard."

"Your are sure that's your boat ahead of us—sure that's the man who is pulling her now?"

"Certain! But jest let me lay me hand on him! I'll fix him for stealing the Katie, the best boat on the river. I will, or me name is not Dove!"

"Pull, boys, pull!" cried Fred, restraining his excitement with the greatest diffuleuty. "We are gainng on him at every stroke. A hundred dollars instead of fifty if we overhaul him before he lands!"

But the mysterious assassin still maintained his lead.

That he was a man of great strength and pulled a powerful oar was plainiy to be seen.

Evidently he was makng for one of the numerous shlpes, where, shooting in among the steamers, lighters, and various other small craft lying between the wharves, escape would be a matter of ease.

Already he had turned his boat toward one of the piers—he was still beyond pistol range, or Fred would have brought him to a speedy halt.

"There he goes, in behind that steamer!" he cried, suddenly, as the black boat ahead disappeared behind the hull of the vessel in question, and was instantly lost from view.

Fred and Dove tried their best to follow his traeks, but without suceess, and they returned to the yacht.

CHAPTER XIV.

SPECULATION.

"Henry, if Mr. Hazelwood calls, show him into my office at once."

"Very good, sir. He left word yesterday that he would be here by eleven o'clock."

"My purchases on the Board In Wabash yesterday boomed that stoek up five points, at least, and the confidence I inspired in others will send it kitng to-day, unless I greatly miss my calculation. Now, as I happen to know that Pomeroy has been sellng short on that particular stoek to the tune of a million and over, I wouldn't wonder if he found himself just a little bit

A YOUNG MONTE CRISTO.

squeezed before he gets through. Bless my soul! If here ain't young Hazelwood now."

The door of the broker's private office was flung open as he spoke, and a young and fashionably-dressed man entered the room.

"Ah! good morning, my dear sir," exclaimed the broker, rising obsequiously, and shaking him warmly by the hand. "I trust I see you well this mornng. You are ahead of time, but will find all your commissions executed to the letter, nevertheless."

It is our young friend Fred Howard who enters and flings himself into one of the elegant leather-bottomed chairs of the private office of Clemmons & Co. with a carefree air.

He returned the salutation of the broker gravely.

Within his secret heart he could not refrain from drawing a momentary comparison between the manner of this man now and when, as a humble broker's clerk, he had frequently visited his office scarce over a year before.

And since that time what strange events had come to pass! Through what varying scenes had he been hurried with a rapidity of change so great that he could scarce realize that himself and that humble lad could be one and the same!

The murder of his parents, the disappearance of his sister, his imprisonment, the recovery of the treasure of the San Cristobal, and all the wonderful train of events that had grown out of the revelations of Magnus Cromety, seemed to him at times but the illusive happenings of some vivid dream, from which he must shortly awake to find himself the Fred Howard of old once more.

"I have all the stocks you ordered me to buy, Mr. Hazelwood," said Mr. Clemmons. "We have driven Wabash preferred up five points. If you take my advice I should say sell at once—"

"I don't wish to sell; I prefer to hold."

"Just as you say. The stock will hold its own to-day, but—"

"There are no 'buts' in the matter at all, Mr. Clemmons; I will let you know when I wish to sell. By the way; were Pomeroy & Co. seeking stock yesterday to cover their shorts?"

"They were, but could not buy at the ruling prices, of course. You seem well posted on the doings of that firm, Mr. Hazelwood. This is the fourth time you have squeezed Pomeroy within a week."

A clerk entered and placed a note in the young man's hands.

"Where's the money?" demanded the broker, with a look of surprise.

"I didn't get it, sir. Mr. Pomeroy called me into his private office, and sent back the check with this note."

With a peculiar smile Fred tore open the note. The smile increased as he read:

"Mr. Hazelwood will confer a favor by presenting the inclosure himself, and an additional favor by calling on the writer without delay."

"RALPH POMEROY."

"Phew!" exclaimed the broker, as the young man passed the note into his hands. "This has an ugly look, I must say. What do you propose to do?"

"To go at once and see what it means," answered Fred, rising quietly. "Meanwhile, Mr. Clemmons, be good enough to hurry to the Stock Exchange, and execute my order without an instant's delay."

As he left the office of Clemmons & Co. the look of triumph upon the face of the Young Monte Cristo increased with every step he took nor did it diminish as he turned from Broad street into Wall and entered the banker's door.

Not twenty minutes had elapsed when the Young Monte Cristo emerged from the banking office of Pomeroy & Co. with a look of triumph upon his face.

Calling to a passing coupe, he leaped into it, and having given his orders to the driver, the vehicle moved rapidly up town.

"I have him now just where I want him," he muttered, as he threw himself back upon the seat. "Thanks to the happy thought which has given me the insight to the daily workings of his office, I hold Ralph Pomeroy's fate in the palm of my hand. I can bring him to justice when I will. But his connection with the murder of my parents still remains to be solved. Until that is done I must be patient, must watch and wait, and hold my peace."

Meanwhile, the couple rattled on and on, until it paused at length before a handsome mansion upon Fifth avenue, just below Seventieth street, and directly opposite the park.

Although comparatively new, as could be easily seen, it was evident that the house had but recently undergone a thorough renovation from top to bottom.

As he entered the library opening off from the parlor—his private room—he hastily rang a silver bell which stood upon a mahogany desk in one corner.

In a second a servant appeared in answer.

"James, send Mrs. Simpson to me."

Presently a matronly-looking lady, who had been engaged by Fred to preside as housekeeper over his new establishment, appeared.

"Ah, Mrs. Simpson, I am back, you see. How is Mr. Ripley now?"

"Much better, Mr. Hazelwood. The doctor has just left him sleeping quietly, and, he says, out of all danger. He thinks he will be quite himself again when he wakes."

"I hope so, Mrs. Simpson. You have been kindness itself to poor Gus. Is Miss Rivers in her apartments?"

"She is, sir?"

"Say to her that I would like to wait upon her at her pleasure."

In changing his quarters from the yacht Justice to his elegant mansion the Young Monte Cristo had, in spite of his intense anxiety regarding Gus Ripley—whose wound had most fortunately not proved fatal—not for a moment forgotten the beautiful but unfortunate young girl whose life he had saved by leaping so courageously from the Battery wall.

Mrs. Simpson, his present housekeeper, had already been engaged at the time of that occurrence, and as the house was about completed, Fred had requested that lady to wait upon the fair stranger who had in such a singular manner been thrown upon his hands, and offer her the hospitalities of his roof until her recovery should be complete.

The offer had been gratefully accepted, and Miss Jennie Rivers—for that proved to be her name—without having even once seen our hero since the fatal night upon which she sought to take her own life, found herself face to face with her benefactor now for the first time.

It was in the cheerful sitting-room attached to the suite of rooms assigned to her that she received him, and Mrs. Simpson departing to attend to other duties, they were left alone.

As Fred Howard bent over her extended hand, it seemed to him that he had never beheld a being so beautiful before.

"I am exceedingly glad of this opportunity to thank you for all your kindness to me, Mr. Hazelwood," she said, sweetly. "I owe more than life to you. I was mad—desperate when I took that fatal leap. I have repented of it most sincerely. The world is still open before me, and must hold something in store for one so young as myself. As I have now fully recovered, I shall leave your house to-morrow and begin the battle of life again."

"There is no need of haste, Miss Rivers," replied Fred, gallantly. "Under the care of Mrs. Simpson, you are welcome to remain here as long as you please. At least stay until you can communicate with your friends."

"I have no friends," she replied, sadly. "Mr. Hazelwood, after what you have done for me, you have the undoubted right to know my history. Listen, and I will tell you all there is to tell."

Fred seated himself opposite his fair guest, and she began her tale:

"My name is Jennie Rivers," she said, in a soft, musical voice. "I was born in Petaluma, California, in 1865."

"My father was a well-to-do wine grower, my mother the daughter of a sea captain, who had, with his entire family except herself, been dead for many years—all of whom having been lost at sea."

"Until about four years ago we lived happily, and I being the only child, had every comfort and luxury that loving hands could bestow. Suddenly my father was stricken down by a fever and died, when it was found that he had left us wholly unprovided for, his estate being most heavily involved."

"Just at that sad time, when we were revolving in our minds what we had better do, a man called upon us, who stated that he had come from New York. He informed my mother, greatly to her surprise, that he was in a position to prove that she had been wronged out of property to a large amount."

"It seemed that her father, my grandfather, had, upon departing for California in 1849, at the time of the great gold excitement, placed a small property, valued at about \$10,000, into the hands of an intimate friend of his, whose name was Samuel Howard."

"Two years later my grandfather, with his wife and several sons, sailed for New York in a ship belonging to himself, and freighted with an enormous treasure in gold, which they had obtained by successful diggings on the Russian river."

"The ship upon which they embarked was never heard of again. With my mother's entire family and all the gold on board it must have gone to the bottom, though how and where no one ever knew."

"Believing the entire family dead, no doubt this man Howard kept my grandfather's estate in his own possession, and, according to the information furnished us by our visitor, fattened upon it and grew very rich."

"He placed the whole case before my mother, and she put the matter into his hands to recover our just dues. She gave him also such family papers as she possessed, and everything which might serve to prove her claim."

"For awhile he wrote her regularly, sent her small sums of money and told her matters were progressing. At last his letters ceased."

"We were miserably poor, my mother and I, and she determined at length to come to New York and look up the matter for herself."

"We arrived here two months ago, saw Ralph Pomeroy—"

"Ralph Pomeroy!" exclaimed Fred, who had, during this narrative exhibited the most singular agitation. "Ralph Pomeroy, did you say?"

"Yes; do you know him? He is a banker on Wall street."

"I— Yes, I know him—that is, I've heard of him. But go on, young lady, go on!"

"We saw Ralph Pomeroy, and he would do nothing for us. Indeed, although there could be no doubt that he was the man who had called upon us in our Californian home and obtained my mother's papers, he refused to recognize us at all."

"We had no means, Mr. Hazelwood, to shorten my sad story: my dear mother died—died for want of food, while I, who had that day seen her buried in the Potter's field, sought to end my

misery by jumping into the waters of the bay from off the Battery wall."

She paused, and, overcome by her feelings, buried her face in her hands and wept.

For an instant Fred Howard stared at her fixedly. Then, approaching the place where she sat, he said in a husky voice:

"Miss Rivers, one question, if you please. The name of your grandfather—what was it? What was the ship in which he sailed?"

"His name was Captain John Hulse," she replied, looking up. "The ship was the San Cristobal."

An instant later, and the Young Monte Cristo stood in his library behind locked doors, alone.

"Ruined by my unhappy father!" he muttered as he paced up and down the floor. "There is—there can be no doubt about it, and what is more, to every dollar of the wealth of the San Cristobal that girl, as the sole surviving relative of Captain Hulse, is beyond all question the legal heir."

CHAPTER XV.

DYNAMITE DOVE MAKES A STATEMENT.

While the approach of evening upon that bright August day found Fred Howard still pacing up and down the floor of his library, a prey to the strange reflections suddenly thrust upon him, it also found Mr. Dynamite Dove, river speculator and champion of those who believe the interests of Ireland can be forwarded by blowing her British oppressors sky high, was engaged in an occupation of quite another sort.

This was nothing more nor less than soliciting subscriptions for the "cause."

Now this way no new work for Mr. Dynamite Dove. In fact, whenever either he himself or his friend Michael Finnegan O'Rafferty, the well-known Irish patriot, chanced to fall short of funds, it had been the custom of the industrious Dove to start out with a subscription paper in the interest of the "emergency fund" to be used in knocking Windsor castle and the whole British royal race into the middle of next week by the use of dynamite properly applied.

Of course the money was all used for this particular purpose, and more of it stuck to the pockets of either collector or distributor, there could be not the least doubt in the world as to that!

Ordinarily extending his field of operations over all parts of the city, upon this particular day and for three days previous Mr. Dove had, with singular persistency, confined his efforts to one quarter alone.

This was Washington street, between Rector street and the block above, among the occupants of the tall tenements directly opposite the warehouse in which his mysterious passenger to the yacht Justice had so strangely disappeared.

It was observed, moreover, by the persons with whom he stopped to discuss Ireland's wrongs that the attention of Mr. Dove was more closely occupied in watching two objects opposite than in paying attention to what was being said by them.

These objects were the doors of the warehouse in question and that of Riodan's saloon.

Night had already fallen, and the great storage warehouse before which the river speculator, acting under orders from the Young Monte Cristo, had now maintained a close watch for three entire days, was already closed, when a man well dressed, and of the appearance of a gentleman, was observed by the sharp-eyed Dove from his station in the saloon opposite to hurriedly ascend the steps, and, opening the door with a key which he produced from his pocket, disappear within.

"Sure, an' who is that?" he demanded of the bartender, indicating with a jerk of his hand the man who had just entered the warehouse upon the opposite side of the way. "Is it wan of the firm that rents the store, or what takes him inside after ivy wan is gone home a good hour ago?"

"That man?" replied the bartender. "Why that's Mr. Pomeroy, the banker. He owns the building and goes in there every few nights after they've closed up, to see that all is safe against fire. That warehouse is mighty valuable property, d'y'e mind."

"Luk at that now! Sure an' it's meself that wud have taken him for a thafe! Well, good-night to yo' neighbor. Your subscription shall be duly reported to the Brotherhood. I'll jest drop over to Riodan's beyond, an' interview him that's there on the good of the cause."

He crossed the street hurriedly, and entered the building occupied by Riodan's saloon.

But, instead of passing under the flaring lamp which marked the entrance to the saloon itself, he disappeared within the doorway leading to the apartments overhead, and dashed up the stairs with a bound.

Now, Mr. Dynamite Dove, although heavy of body, was exceedingly light of foot, and he leaped up the staircase leading to the apartments above Riodan's saloon two steps at a time, in a manner that would have done credit to a much younger man.

A liberal gift from Fred in return for the services rendered upon the night of his escape from Blackwell's Island and the promise of a reward still more liberal had rendered the reckless river speculator a willing assistant in his work of revenge.

What Dove had witnessed in the little house on 108th street upon the night of the murder, and which, through fear of detention as a witness, he had kept most bravely to himself, he had now confided to Fred in all its details.

The result of this confidence was the watch upon which Dove immediately entered for the mysterious man of whom both Fred and himself had caught a momentary glimpse upon the night of their adventure at the time Gus was shot.

And for his patience he was at length rewarded. Into that same warehouse the very man had entered now.

"I have him now, the murtherin' villain!" he muttered, as he leaped up the stairs. "Be the powers, an' it'll take a smarter man than I think he is to shake me to-night. I'll find out what brings him to this place, so I will, an' I'll foller him—I'll foller him till—"

But the soliloquy of the virtuous Mr. Dove here came to a sudden termination, as did his hurried ascent of the staircase as well.

Houses in the poorer localities of New York are much alike, be they new or old, and in his desire to gain the top floor in advance of the man whom he believed about to descend to that floor by way of the iron door opening from the third floor of the great warehouse to the roof of the building in which he now was, he paid little heed to that which might be ahead of him—this, in the darkness which enshrouded the hallway and stairs, would have been no easy task—and before he realized its presence came in sudden and violent contact with a door at the head of the stairs barring further progress to regions above.

He struck the door head on, and before he knew what had happened Mr. Dynamite Dove had lost his feet, and rolling down the staircase, landed plump on his seat of knowledge upon the floor below.

Creeping softly back up the stairs, he gained the door and felt for the knob, moving his hand up and down its surface in the darkness.

There was none.

Evidently the door opened by aid of a spring latch from within. He softly struck a match, and for the space of a single instant surveyed the situation by its feeble light.

Then, thrusting his hand into his pocket, he drew forth a number of slim-looking pieces of wire, which he thrust one by one into the lock.

"Set a thafe to catch a thafe," he muttered, "an', be hivins! to set a thafe to catch a murtherer is all the same. Me skeleton keys, which I always have handy, are just the thing, so they are. If this wan won't fit, t'other will—ha! that does the business! Now, thin, let's see what's on the flure above."

The lock yielded as he spoke, and without a sound Dove stole up the staircase, leaving the door ajar behind him, as a means of hasty retreat.

The stairway, which continued for a distance of some ten feet beyond the door, and the hallway above were entirely dark.

Upon the entrance of the intruder, save for his own stealthy footsteps, not a sound was to be heard.

Suddenly, just as he had placed his foot upon the landing, there fell upon his ear the notes of a well-known and most pathetic air, sang in a clear, ringing female voice.

He groped his way toward the direction from which proceeded the singing as these thoughts passed through his mind, and boldly knocked upon the door connecting with the rooms in front.

Scarce had he done so when the door was thrown open from within, and a most singular sight met his gaze.

Standing before him at the entrance to a most luxuriously furnished apartment, far exceeding anything the man had ever seen before, stood a young and exceedingly beautiful girl, clothed in a loose white robe which extended from her head to her feet, holding a lighted candle in her hand.

"Sir, what is your pleasure?" she demanded of the astonished Dove, at the same time motioning him to enter with a stately wave of the hand. "Those who enter our palace are welcome, though visitors are few."

"Palace! ma'am!" exclaimed the speculator, glancing hastily about him. "An' ye may well say that! Niver in me life did I see anything one-half so illegint, but I am only a poor man meself, an' am collectin' funds for the cause of ould Ireland. Now if I might put yer name down—"

"Name!" interrupted the girl, with a wild, ringing laugh. "I am the Queen of Heaven! I have no name. Royalty has no name, and I am royalty itself; the persons and titles of all the kings and queens of the earth are combined in me."

"She's mad!" exclaimed Dove, drawing back in alarm. "Mad as a March hare!"

One glance at the wild eyes of the beautiful girl was enough to assure him of this sad truth.

Now, Mr. Dynamite Dove entertained that wholesome fear of the insane common to all ignorant men.

That he had made a huge mistake in forcing his way into these apartments was evident.

So far as he could see the girl was alone, no sign of the man in whose pursuit he was being anywhere visible.

"I beg pardon, miss!" he said, abruptly, moving toward the door; I've made a mistake—good evenin' to you."

"Mistake!" cried the girl, with a wild laugh. "I tell you, sir, it's all a mistake. They keep me locked up here, a prisoner on this floor. My jailer is Satan himself. He visited me just now, and, as usual, ascended to the skies through the roof. Is not

that a mistake? Angels live in the skies; devils ought to live below, not above!"

"When did he go?" exclaimed Dove, pausing in sudden interest.

A strange thought had flashed through his mind.

Might not this visitor—this Satan who ascended to heaven through the roof—be the very man he was after?

Certainly it appeared that such might be the case, and if so he must, if he intended to follow him, regain the street without an instant's delay.

"He left me but a moment ago," answered the girl, with a shudder. "He is cruel—wicked! His hands are red with blood. Why does he keep me here? Can you tell me, sir? If you can I wish you would."

"Faith, an' I'll never tell ye," exclaimed Dove, moving toward the stairs. "Go inside now, like a good gurl, an' don't be after settin' fire to the house wid the candle, till I go down an' ax him what ye want to know."

He sprang down the stairs as he spoke, in his hurry forgetting to close the latched door behind him, and in another moment stood in the street.

Casting his eyes up and down, he perceived, just in the act of leaving the great warehouse next door, the very man uppermost in his thoughts.

Hurriedly locking the door of the warehouse, the man, with a hasty glance behind him, walked briskly past the entrance of Riodan's saloon, past the watching Dove, and turned up Reetor street in the direction of Broadway.

As the river speculator moved stealthily after him there emerged from the doorway of the house the form of a beautiful young girl, enveloped from head to foot in a dark cloak, beneath which the ends of her flowing hair could be plainly seen, almost sweeping the ground behind.

With a wild glane here and there, her eyes seemed to rest at last upon the retreating form of Mr. Dynamite Dove.

"Free—free at last!" she muttered, wildly. "Yonder goes my deliverer. I will follow him, and he shall take me home!"

CHAPTER XVI.

PURPOSES AND CROSS-PURPOSES.

In the progress of our story, it is now necessary for us to turn back slightly in the matter of time, and see what have been the doings of Banker Pomeroy during this memorable day of the Young Monte Cristo and his friends.

With the transactions of his business hours we have nothing to do—our concern is with what happened later on.

It was four o'clock and after when Ralph Pomeroy left the bank, and calling a hack, threw himself wearily back among the cushions, having given the driver an address up town.

As the door of the hack was closed a man walked slowly down the steps of the bank and stood gazing off into vacancy.

No sooner had the vehicle containing the banker moved off toward Broadway than this individual, leaping into a second hack which seemingly stood in waiting gave word to the driver, and he started off after the first hack.

It was Mr. Murray, Ralph Pomeroy's head clerk, who had performed this singular maneuver.

Now this same Mr. Murray had been a clerk in Ralph Pomeroy's office in the days when Fred Howard, his office-boy, had been arrested and imprisoned for theft.

"Blame the luck!" muttered the banker, as the vehicle in which he sat moved rapidly up Broadway. "Within the last two months everything has gone against me—stocks, speculations, real estate—in fact, every business enterprise which I have undertaken, and at the bottom of it all is that brat of a boy! Would to Heaven he had died with his sniveling old father! But no! had that been the case, where would this vast treasure have been? He thinks I don't know him," he continued, with a sneering laugh. "He thinks I can't see through his change of name and his flimsy English disguise. He offered to lend me money, indeed! Money from the lost treasure of the San Cristobal!"

"He little dreams that I hold documents in my possession signed by the sole heir of Captain John Hulse, the rightful owners of that treasure, assigning every dollar's worth of their estate to my hands."

"Have a care, my bold Mr. Hazelwood! Let my plans but prove one half as good as I think them, and this very night I sweep your newly-acquired wealth from your pocket into mine, and pack you off to Blackwell's Island, a convict once more, to serve out your unexpired term."

With an expression of fiendish triumph upon his face he sank back upon the cushions and relapsed into silence, which was maintained during the remainder of the drive.

Suddenly, the hack came to a halt before a building on the left-hand side of Broadway, just below Union Square.

Stepping out, the banker ran briskly up-stairs to the second story, and entered an office, upon the door of which was displayed the sign:

"PETERS & CO.,

"Detectives and General Inquiry Office."

"Is my man here?" he asked, entering and addressing a long-nosed, bilious-looking clerk who sat writing behind a desk.

"Yes, sir. Step into the private room."

Then, turning his head slightly behind him, he called in the direction of a door opening into a second office, from which voices could be heard issuing:

"Shandley, some one for you!"

Instantly a stout, red-faced man appeared, and followed the banker into a private room, the door of which was closed.

"Well, Mr. Shandley, and what have you learned in my matter since I saw you last?" asked Ralph Pomeroy, sinking into a chair. "If you have got my game in a position where I can pounce upon it at once I shall double my reward."

"Well, I just have," replied the man, seating himself in turn carelessly upon a table facing the banker as he spoke.

"I've worked up that fellow's past the prettiest you ever seen. There's nothing to hinder you nipping him this very night."

"Good! Let me hear all about it at once."

"I'll just read you my notes in the ease, Mr. Pomeroy," replied the private detective—for such the man was—"it'll be the easiest way of explaining the hull affair."

He took from his pocket a greasy memorandum book as he spoke, and began to read.

"Harry Hazelwood, known as the 'Young Monte Cristo,' is not an Englishman, as is generally believed.

"He was born in this city, and his true name is Fred Howard, and is the son of old Samuel Howard, who with his wife was murdered in 108th street, Harlem, about two years ago."

"Yes, yes. I know all about that," exclaimed the banker, moving uneasily in his chair. "He was a clerk in my office, and he robbed me of a thousand dollars, was sent to the island and escaped. Go on to the rest."

"Well, I was coming to it when you interrupted me," replied the detective.

"After he escaped, he and a young feller, named Gus Ripley, somehow got onto an immense treasure on board of a sunken ship down off Patchogue."

"They raised it themselves, and loaded it on to a ship and sailed to England. This summer they came back in the yacht Justice as rich as a Vanderbilt. One night last week Fred Howard, in going out to his yacht, rescued a young lady named Jennie Rivers who tried to commit suicide by jumping over the Battery wall—"

"Jennie Rivers!" exclaimed the banker, springing to his feet. "Did you say Jennie Rivers?"

"That was the name," replied Mr. Shandley, carelessly. "Do you know the girl?"

"Yes—no—that is, I did know a person by that name, but I thought she had—"

"Gone to California? Well, she was a-going, but, yer see, her mother died, and she—"

"Well, well—never mind the girl! Go on!"

"There ain't much more to tell, but what there is is important. He took the girl to his yacht. That night some feller shot through the cabin window of the yacht, and came near killing Gus Ripley. All three of them are now at this Young Monte Cristo's house on Fifth avenue."

"But you said the game was in our hands?" exclaimed the banker, excitedly; "that we could capture him to-night?"

"So we can. He's an escaped convict. I can nip him and send him back to the island if it'll do you any good. To-night at twelve he has an appointment with a river thief what they call 'Dynamite Dove,' who lives in a little shanty on the rocks at the foot of Fifty-eighth street. Meet me there, or, still better, at the saloon on the corner of First avenue and Fifty-eighth street, and we'll nip them both. All you have got to do is to prove his identity to send him back where he belongs."

"I'll do it," said the banker, after a moment's musing. "With Fred Howard out of my path, I'm free to act, and it will go bad with— But no matter! Yes, Shandley, I'll meet you at the appointed time and place. We'll attend to the ease of this young Monte Cristo. Once let me see him back in his prison cell and double the reward I named is yours."

He arose as he spoke, and shaking hands with the detective, passed from the office of Peters & Co., entered the hack and was driven rapidly away.

No sooner had he left than a door opening into the private office of the detective agency from the other side was thrown back, and a young man, in company with Mr. Peters, the proprietor, entered the room.

"You heard all, Mr. Murray," said the latter, "and you had best see Mr. Hazelwood and warn him at once. My man Shandley knows nothing, and will carry out his plan as expressed. Of course, Mr. Hazelwood wants to be anywhere rather in Dove's shanty to-night."

"I shall go to him now," answered the head clerk of Pomeroy & Co., with more decision than he was wont to express. "There are many sides to this strange affair, Mr. Peters. Mr. Hazelwood must decide for himself what is the best course to pursue."

And so it happened that as the first hack, containing Ralph Pomeroy, went down-town, the second, bearing Murray, his confidential clerk, went up; nor did it stop until it had reached the Young Monte Cristo's door.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SHANTY ON THE ROCKS AT MIDNIGHT—THE SCHEMES OF BANKER POMEROY MEET WITH A SUDDEN CHECK.

At a little after eleven o'clock on the evening of this day of remarkable happenings described in the last few chapters, across the vacant lots which lie in the neighborhood of First avenue and

Sixtieth street a young man might have been observed, by any one chancing to traverse this lonely region at so late an hour, moving rapidly toward the rocky bluffs which at this point overhang the water's edge.

He was dressed in a suit of cheap, slop-shop clothing, stout shoes, and low, slouch felt hat, drawn well down over his eyes.

His steps were directed toward a little shanty perched upon the top of the bluff—the "rocks," as the place was called by the old-time residents of the neighborhood—neatly whitewashed, with green door and shutter tightly closed, standing at a point where Fifty-eighth street was at some future time destined to cross.

Through the crevices in the green shutter a dim light shone, proving the presence of some one within.

And that "some one" was no less a personage than Mr. Dynamite Dove.

Having abandoned one shanty for reasons best known to himself, the bold river speculator had removed his humble belongings to this, another of the same sort, some two blocks or more distant from the first, which had afforded to Fred Heward such opportune shelter upon the night of his memorable escape.

The boy to whom our attention has been called approached the door of the shanty and knocked, being instantly admitted by the collector of skirmishing funds himself.

By the dim light of the solitary lamp which illuminates the humble room we may see his face more plainly now.

It is the Young Monte Cristo himself—Fred Howard, our hero, in the very clothes so kindly furnished by the man before him upon the night of the escape from Blackwell's Island, now more than a year ago.

"Well, Dove, I'm on hand, you see," he exclaimed, seating himself in a rickety chair. "Now, what luck? Have you seen the man again? Have you found out who he is?"

"I have that," replied the river speculator, with a disgusted air. "After hanging about the neighborhood until every one began to wonder what I was about, I spied him entering the warehouse, got onto his little racket above Riodan's saloon, where he keeps a madwoman confined, and thin followed him through the street until, worse luck, by stopping for wan moment, to get a bit of a drink, I lost sight of him altogether, for which same I want you to write me down an ass."

"But his name? Did you learn it?" said Fred, eagerly. "Above all else, that is what I want to know."

"Sure they tould me down there that his name is Pomeroy—" "Pomeroy!"

Fred Howard had leaped to his feet.

"Pomeroy, the murderer of my parents! I have guessed it! Still, villain though he is, I could not think—"

"He did it! Me lad, I tell you he did it. I saw it all through the side window opening upon the alley which ran behind your house, as I was about to knock at the dure an' solicit funds for ould Ireland's cause.

"They were havin' a bitter quarrel, the ould man an' he, and, he whips out a gun an' pops him. As he did so the ould woman entered and screams, an' then the murtherin' villain that he was, he kilt her too. I should have spoke at the time, I know, but I'm a pure man, and for fear of the House of Detention I held me pace."

"But it is not yet too late for my revenge," muttered the boy, with pale face and lips tightly clenched. "I shall wait no longer, but for his many crimes bring this wretch to justice at once."

"An' ye owe him another, thin," said Dove firmly. "Whist, now, an' I shall surprise ye agin."

"He is the man what I took off to the Justice in me boat on the night of the storm. I can swear to it, in spite of his disguise. The villain what killed your parents, me lad, and the man what shot your friend through the winder of your yacht, were wan an' the same."

"Dove, you can't mean it!"

"But I do. Sure, I'd know him among a thousand. I never forget a face, an' am too well used to disguises meself to be deceived by the likes of him."

"Then he must know who I am!" exclaimed Fred. "Ah! I see. He wanted the money I placed with him as a bait—he feared my investigation into his past crimes."

"Well, well! so be it, Ralph Pomeroy! It adds but another to the score between us. The shot which struck poor Gus was unquestionably meant for me—the longer that score, the sweeter my revenge!"

"An' mine," said Dove, dryly. "Sure an' didn't he try to drown me, whin I laned over the boat to pick up the packet?"

"Packet! What packet?"

"This," said the man, drawing from his bosom a sealed packet and laying it on the table which stood between them.

Breaking the seals as he spoke, he drew from the packet several papers, holding them up each in turn to the light.

The first was a letter addressed to himself, and read as follows:

"To My Dear Son Fred: Hard as it is for a father to acknowledge himself a scoundrel to his only son, such, my dear boy, is my duty to you.

"My fortune, which we have so long enjoyed, but which is now lost to us forever, was amassed by fraud, built upon a foundation of money not my own.

"Many years ago there was placed in my hands certain property by a friend, Captain John Hulse by name, to guard for him while he went to seek his fortune in the California mines.

"He sought it and he found it. He accumulated many millions in gold.

"Two years later, with, as I suppose, his entire family, Captain Hulse embarked upon the ship San Cristobal, and sailed for the East.

"This ship was never heard from again.

"With his brave master, the treasure and all belonging to him, it was undoubtedly lost at sea. Then the devil tempted me. I, believing no one knew of the property he had placed in my hands, appropriated it for myself. I speculated with it; I grew rich, but my punishment was to come.

"In former years I, as you know, took Ralph Pomeroy, almost a beggar, from the streets—took him into my business—took him into my home. I, who had been faithless to my trust, trusted him, believing him an honorable man.

"He robbed me of my private papers—he learned what I had done. Furthermore, he learned that one child of my much-wronged friend still lived, visited her in her Californian home, and persuaded her to bring action against me for the money I had appropriated for myself.

"And through all this I suspected nothing, believing him to be still my friend, and when ruin and exposure stared me in the face, by his suggestion I determined to make over my entire property to my wife, that I might compromise matters without surrendering all.

"To cover the requirements of the law, which forbids the direct transfer of property from husband to wife when a suit is pending, I made over everything I possessed to Ralph Pomeroy himself, he promising to transfer it to my wife next day.

"Fred, he kept it all—houses and lots, stocks and bonds—kept it all, and threatened me with arrest and exposure if I attempted to appeal to the courts, turned and laughed at me for a poor, weak fool.

"This, as I had been for years regarded as an honorable man, was more than I could bear to contemplate.

"A year has now elapsed in my vain endeavors to compromise with this scoundrel, who I now see has no intention of doing justice either to me or to those to whom a portion of my estate rightfully belongs, and feeling that day by day I am growing weaker, and seeing nothing but darkness for me in this maze into which my own wickedness had led me, I write these lines that in case I am suddenly removed these strange complications may be rendered in some measure clear to you, my son, and that you may do justice both to the living, the heirs of my old friend John Hulse, and to the dead. Your unhappy father,

"Samuel Howard."

Folding the paper, Fred silently laid it down.

"It is as I feared," he muttered. "Wronged by my dead father, wronged by myself, and doubly wronged by Ralph Pomeroy, by a mysterious Providence Jennie Rivers, the last descendant of Captain Hulse, has been thrown upon my hands. Well, she shall not find me lacking. Thank Heaven, already the wrong has been in some measure righted. There now remains for me to complete this act of justice—and revenge."

He hastily examined the remaining papers as he spoke, which proved to be schedules of the Hulse property, of the property once held by his father, and other documents of a similar sort, and thrust them in his breast.

"And now, my friend, to action!" he exclaimed, springing to his feet. "For the part you have played in my affairs be assured you shall not go unrewarded. But a few moments must elapse when—"

A loud knocking at the door of the shanty cut short his speech.

At the same instant the little clock upon the mantel rang out the hour of twelve.

"Open the door in there!" cried a coarse voice without. "Open the door or we'll break it in!"

"Be hivins! it's the cops, an' they're after me at last!" cried the river speculator, springing to his feet in alarm. "I spotted wan of them blame detectives hangin' around here only yesterday. I know'd he was after no good!"

Before the words had died from his lips Fred flung open the door.

"I am the man they seek!" he said, sternly. "The moment of my revenge has come!"

Even as he spoke Ralph Pomeroy and a large, coarse-looking man, whom the reader will at once recognize as Detective Shandley, entered the room.

"That's the fellow!" cried the banker, pointing to our hero. "I thought we would find him here. Arrest that boy, officer. He is an escaped convict from Blackwell's Island, sentenced for robbery over a year ago!"

Scarce had the words been uttered when a female figure, clothed in a long, flowing white robe, with hair hanging down almost to her feet, glided in behind the intruders, and pointed at Pomeroy with her thin white hand.

"No, no!" she cried. "Arrest this man! I charge him with the murder of my father and mother—Samuel Howard and his wife!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

REVENGE AT LAST—THE END.

"Bertha! My sister!"

It was Fred Howard who spoke. With one bound he had clasped the girl in his arms.

A YOUNG MONTE CRISTO.

At the same instant the noise of many feet was heard without the shanty, and a number of persons rushed into the room.

Of these the foremost were three blue-coated policemen, following whom came Murray, the banker's confidential clerk, supporting Miss Jennie Rivers upon his arm.

"Arrest that man, officers!" cried Fred, pointing toward the banker, who stood trembling with mingled rage and astonishment. "What this lady says is true! I charge him with the Howard murder, committed in the house in 108th street, in October, 1882."

"It is false! The woman is mad!"

"Mad once, and made so by your fiendish cruelty!" said Bertha, calmly. "In my wanderings to-night Heaven has restored my reason—restored it in time to bring justice upon your sinful head."

"Again I say it is false," cried the villain hoarsely. "Officers, if you are here to do your duty, you had best not listen to this mad woman, but take that boy, an escaped convict, into custody—he is a thief, he robbed me, and was convicted of the crime."

"Of the crime you falsely charged upon him," said Murray the clerk, coming forward, and looking very pale.

"You put the bills in Fred's coat-pocket yourself, Mr. Pomeroy, and you know well enough that I can prove it, for, I am ashamed to say, I saw the rascally action done, and for money held my peace."

"I guess you're the feller we want fast enough, Mr. Man," said one of the policemen, suddenly springing forward and snapping a pair of handcuffs about the wrists of the astonished banker.

"This here affair is a little too complicated for us. We'll just take you in accordin' to orders, and let the law decide who's who and which is right."

Pushing the baffled scoundrel before him, the officer moved toward the door of the shanty, the others standing aside to allow him to pass.

With a look of the most intense hatred, Ralph Pomeroy suddenly planted his feet against the door, and turned on Fred.

"You think you have baffled me, boy!" he hissed. "Beware! I still have my revenge! Know that every dollar of the wealth you raised with so much toil from the wreck of the San Cristobal belongs to that girl who stands by your side, and by her assignment to me!"

"Not so, Ralph Pomeroy!" replied Fred, calmly, at the same time flinging his arm about the form of Jennie Rivers. My revenge is complete! Even of that sinner I now deprive you. The paper you hold was obtained by fraud and is not worth a rush. The gold of the San Cristobal belongs to this lady alone, as the last living descendant of its former owner, Captain John Hulse, and as I have this night made her my wife; go to the scaffold with the knowledge that through her every dollar of it belongs to me!"

* * * * *

And so endeth the chapter.

The work of Fred Howard was done.

The next day's sun found Ralph Pomeroy in the Tombs, while our hero, his lovely wife, and the sister, deeply loved, and now so strangely restored to him, all duly installed in their Fifth avenue home.

To make such brief explanations as are necessary before we bring to a close this sketch of the strange life of the rich New Yorker now known far and wide as the Young Monte Cristo, need occupy but little space.

For the murder of Samuel Howard and his aged wife Ralph Pomeroy was brought to trial, convicted by the jury without a dissenting voice, and in due time mounted the scaffold in the Tombs' yard for his many crimes.

At this trial the whole mystery of the Howard murder was made plain, through the testimony of Bertha, the sister of our hero, and Mr. Daniel—better known to our readers as Dynamite—Dove.

Just at dusk upon that fatal night, Pomeroy had called at the little house in One Hundred and Eighth street, in a coach, and demanded to see the ruined real estate operator alone.

The conversation took place in the back parlor, or dining-room—it was used as both—and scarce five minutes had elapsed before Mrs. Howard and Bertha, who were seated in the room in front, heard the sudden report of a pistol from behind the closed doors, and the sound of a heavy falling to the floor.

Both instantly rushed into the back parlor, where they were met by Pomeroy, pistol in hand.

"Yes, I have killed him!" he cried. "He threatened me, and I have killed him!"

As he spoke he discharged the pistol toward them. Instantly killing the unhappy wife of his victim, while the daughter fell fainting to the floor.

From that instant Bertha could remember nothing.

That she lost her reason in that awful moment, was removed by Pomeroy in the coach to the rooms over the Greenwich street saloon, or whether her installment there was of later date, were things which could be only surmised.

Had Dove, who, in his collecting rounds, actually saw the murderer done through the window of the little dining-room opening out upon the alley, but have been possessed of more courage, and either interfered or notified the police, the whole course of events might have been changed.

Fear of detention as a witness and consequent exposure of his peculiar business methods prevented this, however, and the man simply turned and fled, leaving matters to take their course.

The sudden restoration of Bertha to reason, while remarkable, is by no means unprecedented.

In the street in the midst of her wandering light suddenly broke upon the clouded mind of the stricken girl.

She saw but one object, the murderer of her parents, and she followed him—followed to bear witness against him just at the critical time.

Why one so utterly bad had suffered the girl to live at all was a mystery, unless the love he once professed to feel for her could be assigned as the cause.

Indeed, by many Ralph Pomeroy was deemed insane.

And he was insane.

Insane in his selfish greed, insane in his murderous hatred of all who crossed his path.

But, as the judge who presided at the trial very properly remarked, when in the summing up the attempt of the prisoner to murder our hero in his yacht was alluded to "Such lunatics as this man are better dead than alive."

The very day following the arrest of its head the banking house of Pomeroy & Co. miserably failed.

Through the information furnished by Murray the clerk—who, repenting of the mean part he had played in allowing himself to be bought up to help convict his former fellow clerk of a theft he never committed—Fred had been enabled to thwart his enemy's every move.

There was nothing saved from the wreck. Of all the wealth with which he had wrongfully possessed himself not a penny of Ralph Pomeroy's money remained.

Then it was that his many rascally transactions were made clear to the world. And for his downfall his business associates had no tears to shed.

They searched his private papers, gaining much light upon his affairs. They searched the apartments above Riodan's saloon, and found them in charge of the woman who had intercepted Dove upon the stairs.

It appeared that this building, in common with the warehouse next door, had been the property of the banker, purchased from the funds gained from the Howard estate.

He had fitted up these rooms in the peculiar manner described, placing Bertha in charge of this woman, and visiting her from time to time, usually entering by way of the roof through the iron door of the warehouse adjoining.

Thus his escape from the pursuers on the night he fired the shot through the window of the Justine was made entirely plain.

Usually the woman in charge of Bertha remained with her in the apartments upon the top floor; but upon the night of Dove's visit she had that instant stepped down to the rooms beneath, leaving, as she supposed, Pomeroy himself with her charge.

Evidently the banker had anticipated her speedy return, and had departed as usual by the roof, without waiting to see it actually take place, with the fortunate results to those of interest to us in this estate, which have already been narrated.

And so the gold of the San Cristobal fell into the possession of its rightful owners at last.

Our hero, acting from an innate desire to do exactly what was right, after due consideration waited upon Miss Jennie Rivers, and relating the entire story of its finding, offered to restore it all to her.

This the young lady most magnanimously refused.

At this juncture Murray, the clerk, appeared, and learning from him the scheme on foot for his arrest, Fred determined to bring matters to a focus at once.

It was decided upon consultation with Miss Jennie, that their marriage should immediately take place, in order that Fred could be in position to act for her, in case of any claim Pomeroy might make, on the ground that her mother had assigned all rights in any property she possessed to him.

A clergyman was at once sent for, and in the presence of Mrs. Simpson and Murray the ceremony was immediately performed, and Fred started to keep his appointment with Dove at the shanty on the rocks.

Nor have either of them seen cause to regret it since.

Long ago Gus Ripley, whose share in the gold of the San Cristobal was not disturbed, fully recovered. He has married Bertha, and two happier families than the Ripleys and the Howards, who occupy together the great mansion on Fifth avenue, opposite the park, never existed, and it is our belief never will exist again.

Nor in his enjoyment of the gold of the treasure ship did Fred forget the kind-hearted old Spanish convict, to whom he was indebted for all the happiness he now enjoyed.

His remains were removed from Blackwell's Island, high mass was said for the repose of his soul, and all that was mortal of Magnus Cromey was duly conveyed to Cavalry Cemetery and interred in consecrated ground.

Mr. Dynamite Dove, now a thoroughly reformed character and butler at the great house, enacted the part of chief mourner, and indulged in many feeling comments upon the merits of the deceased, although it was wellknown that he had never seen him in life.

Let any stranger visiting New York ask whose house is the finest on the avenue, who owns the swiftest yacht on the bay, who drives the fastest team on the road, has the prettiest wife, and in every way enjoys life the most, and but one answer will be returned.

Next week's issue will contain "WRECKED IN AN UNKNOWN SEA; OR, CAST ON A MYSTERIOUS ISLAND." By Capt. Thos. H. Wilson.

CURRENT NEWS

The Mayor of Commerce, Ga., fined the Mayor pro tem., and the Mayor pro tem. in turn fined the Mayor in the Mayor's Court. The offence in both instances was automobile speeding. Splendid arrangement. Long time between fines, though.

A number of American boys have just built hydroaeroplanes that have flown two or three hundred feet in the air after skimming over the surface of the water for twenty or thirty feet. Sometimes, however, things will happen and the model gets a ducking.

A Cleveland correspondent now wires that Mr. Rockefeller took notes of a sermon to read to Mrs. Rockefeller when he got home. Mr. Rockefeller is fully entitled to act as reporter if he so desires. He is even a member of the American Newspaper Humorists' Association.

With a blue dragon floating from the jackstaff, the Chinese cruiser Hai Chi arrived in New York harbor a few days since. She was given a great welcome as she glided up the North River and dropped anchor. Admiral Ching Pih Kovang entertained the Chinese Boy Scouts aboard the warship.

Old Fort Stevens, near Washington, is to be "monumented." On the side of the breastworks from which President Lincoln viewed the defeat of Gen. Early's attempt to capture Washington in 1864 a boulder monument, to stand about nine feet high and to be capped by a five-ton stone, will be erected within a few months.

Mr. Carnegie is as devoted as ever to golf and fishing, but he dislikes shooting and hates to take life in any form—except the life of a fish. On the opening day of the grouse season this year only two guns shot over the Skibo moors; the bag was modest, only forty brace, but Mr. Carnegie considered it a slaughter and asked his guests not to shoot again for several days.

Lieut. Robert Boyd, of the American Volunteer Life Saving Society, stationed at the Sanitary Baths, South Beach, Staten Island, though only eighteen years old, has made a record as a life saver. He has saved fifteen persons from drowning since May 30th. Lieut. Boyd's record of achievements in life-saving has been forwarded to the Carnegie Hero Fund and it is regarded as probable that he will receive a medal.

With a box of sardines and some crackers to stay his hunger in emergencies, Vance Hewitt, sixteen years old, left Salina recently on foot for Hastings, Neb., 200 miles away, where he will attend college. Young Hewitt intends to walk the entire distance, having trained two months in preparation for the trip. He carried a blanket and will sleep on the prairie wherever he happens to be when night overtakes him.

Jesse James, Jr., attorney and son of a notorious Missouri bandit, and Mrs. Stella F. James, though divorced recently, remarried. Mrs. James was allowed \$100 a month alimony and the custody of the children. Mr. James had the privilege of visiting the children. He went often to the James home to take them motor-car riding. Finally, Mrs. James began to take rides with her former husband and children. Now they are married again.

The Sunday World Walking Club, in which last year 10,000 boys and girls in the New York public schools enrolled for membership, was open for enrollment for the second year of its work last month. The club year will, as last year, be divided into quarters, with prizes for each quarter. A new registration is required of all members of the club for the year 1911-12. Entry blanks will be furnished to teachers on application to the Sunday World.

Owing to the lateness of Harvard's decision not to come to West Point this fall, the soldiers were unable to fill the reserved date with another big team. Georgetown will make their initial appearance on the West Point gridiron November 4. Nothing definite has yet been decided on as to the time or the place for the Army-Navy game, but the Army would prefer to play the final game on November 25. The West Point team has obtained the services of Harry Tuthill, of the Detroit Americans, to train them this season in place of James Temple, who has resigned. The schedule of games to be played on the West Point grounds follows:—October 14, Rutgers; October 21, Yale; October 28, Lehigh; November 4, Georgetown; November 11, Bucknell, and November 18, Colgate.

A race meet at Santa Monica on Oct. 14, a twenty-four-hour race on the Los Angeles Motordrome on Oct. 21, a 600-mile endurance run from Los Angeles to Phoenix, Ariz., on Nov. 4, and races at Phoenix on the completion of this run is the southern California race schedule. This will hold the attention of motorists between now and the Fairmount Park races at Philadelphia on Nov. 7 and the Grand Prize race at Savannah on Nov. 30. The

southern California distributors for Cole 30-40 cars have secured Johnny Jenkins to drive a Cole car in all the events. Harry Herrick is expected to be the second Cole pilot in the races. The Mercer, Flat, National, Thomas, Winton, Simplex, Cadillac and Buick men have already signified their intention of taking part. The total cash prizes are close to \$8,000.

Some of Thomas A. Edison's recent dicta: The monkey in us will out even if only in one feature that reverts. There is something wrong in a man's brain corresponding to something wrong in his features. Primary colors in a woman's toilette are a sign of an undeveloped sense. A woman's skirts should flow in curved lines from her hip. The fine proportion in mechanical things makes me intensely susceptible to the slightest deviation from the classic form. I actually suffer through my sight. Civilization must be merciless as Nature herself. Sleep is a bad habit. Life's too short for sleep. It takes me one minute to undress at night, forty seconds to fall asleep and two minutes to dress in the morning. That's living so that Time gets no innings.

Plans have just been approved by the officials of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company for building the largest artificial lake in the world in Nevada. The site for the immense reservoir is at Lake Spalding, now a vast body of water, and it includes that lake in the new lake that is to be. The storage capacity of the new dam is so great that figures hardly convey its immensity. The storage capacity told in figures is 2,500,000,000 cubic feet of water. The high dam that holds the water back at Lake Spalding at the present time is to be completely engulfed and the hills that tower above the lake in back of the water will be inundated when the immense dam further down the canyon is thrown across the natural narrow gorge that will permit of this immense undertaking.

Mr. Edison's recent departure from Budapest, like the halts en route here, was signalized by extraordinary manifestations akin to a royal progress. The Budapest newspapers issued special editions announcing the time of the inventor's departure in scare headlines; the crowd was so thick before the Grand Hotel Hungaria that Edison had to fight his way to his car. Edison had sat up until three o'clock in the morning at Brunn swapping stories with old associates at Menlo Park, who accompanied him from Budapest. At that hour Edison is at his best as a conversationalist. "Sleep is a bad habit," he remarked when it was suggested to him that it was time to go to bed. "For twenty years, practically, I slept on a bench with my clothes on. My workmen were forced to follow my example. For the first four or five days they suffered, afterwards they felt so fine that when they were told to knock off work they insisted on working on for nothing, merely to enjoy the physical exaltation.

This season promises many surprises. Many of the old veterans of the football have left the colleges, and the line-ups will contain new faces—men who have shown good form in minor games but who lack the experience which can be obtained only in great battles. Because of this change in the personnel of the teams the result of the struggles between Yale, Harvard, Princeton, Cornell, Columbia, West Point and Annapolis is likely to show a complete change over that of last year. The new rules reduced the number of accidents to a minimum last year, and the rules as now modified promise to eliminate a great deal of the danger of players being hurt. It was the forward pass that came in for the most attention from the rule-makers, and there is much speculation as to whether in its new dressing it will be a success. According to the new rule forward pass is illegal when the player receiving it fails to hold onto the ball. When a forward pass is declared illegal it will be returned to the place where it was originally put into play. This year when a player catches a forward pass the players on the defensive can tackle him as soon as he catches the ball. Another important change in the code is that which lessens the time between quarters. Last year the players were obliged to wait so long before resuming play that they became thoroughly chilled, their muscles stiffening and preventing them from putting up their best game. Now the teams will only pause long enough between quarters to permit of their changing of goals. In the future the umpire will keep time instead of the head linesman. The head linesman will also judge all offside plays instead of only those made by ends, as heretofore. The rules also provide a penalty for the player resorting to the trick of concealing the ball and such artifices, which do not demonstrate any real football ability. It was on a play where a grim determination to turn out one of the best football teams in the history of Dickinson College pervades the collegiate mind at present. With a bevy of youthful athletes that would make any athletic trainer look up, and one of the leading Eastern football coaches, in the person of S. F. Pauxtis, Dickinson stands good chances of arriving at the goal of her long delayed ambitions. Pursuing the athletic policy recently laid down, a larger number of candidates will be brought in the front as soon as college and law schools are in full swing.

NIX

OR,

The Boy Without a Mind

By D. W. STEVENS

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER III (continued)

"I wonder if the girl is 'mashed' on you?" thought Harry, and he scarcely spoke again until they found themselves climbing up the tailor's stairs and had entered his modest room.

"I don't care who or what you are, you're a brave fellow anyhow," he broke out suddenly as Dionysius dropped into the nearest chair. "If you hadn't been on hand just as you were, those wretches would have got the girl into the hack sure."

"Do you think so?"

"Why, I am sure of it."

"T—that's lucky. Perhaps she t—thinks so and will show me a little more f—favor—"

"Ah! Then you are not so very intimately acquainted after all."

"Between ourselves, no. Only sp-sp-spoke to her for the f—first time to-night."

"Oh! What did she say?"

"T-told me to m-mind my b-b-business. Oh, ouch! By gracious, how my leg hurts!"

"Pull up your pants and let me look at it," said Harry, kindly. "There, that's the way. No, it is not injured. You must have wrenched it in some way when you fell. Here is the liniment. I'll give it a rubbing, that will take the pain out in no time. I've used it myself, and know that it's splendid stuff."

"In fact, the liniment proved to possess all the virtues that Harry claimed for it.

In a few minutes the millionaire's son was ready to pull his trousers leg down again, and declared that he was much relieved.

"Will you have a cigar, Mr. Shaw?" he asked, after expressing his thanks, at the same time producing his case.

"Thank you; yes. Matches? Here they are. Now I'm going to ask you a question or two, which you must answer if you can, for I'm a detective officer and I've got to make a report to the police of the attempt we saw made to carry that girl off."

"Great h-h-heavens! A d-d-detective. W-w-why didn't you s-say so? If there's one fellow above another that I've been wanting to know for a year b-back it's a detective," and Dionysius stared at Harry Shaw with such evident admiration that the latter could not refrain from bursting into a hearty laugh.

They were good friends from that moment.

In spite of his affected manner, Dionysius De Silver proved himself a thoroughly enjoyable companion.

Soon he had told the whole story of his acquaintance with Miss Mugg, which conveyed but one piece of information to Harry.

The girl was a ballet dancer at the old Bowery Theater. Now her occupation was no longer a mystery, but this in no wise explained her abrupt, almost rude departure after the frustrated attack upon her by the two men.

Harry jotted down Mr. De Silver's address, in case he should want to communicate with him further.

"Do you know Miss Mugg?" inquired Dionysius. "I saw you speaking to her down by the Atlantic Garden."

"No, I don't know her."

"Oh, I thought you did."

"I only recognized her as a neighbor of mine and offered to see her home under my umbrella."

"J-just what I offered, but she wouldn't have it."

"No more would she from me."

"Guess I'll drop her. She don't seem to c-care for my acquaintance. Why, she never even stopped to say thank you after what we did for her. But s-say, where does she live?"

Harry walked to the window and drew up the shade. There stood the mysterious house with its one window just peeping above the fence in the pelting rain.

"There's where she lives."

"H-heavens! A h-hovel."

"Looks like it. Did you expect to find a ballet dancer at the Bowery living in a gilded palace?"

"Don't m-make f-fun of me, Mr. Shaw."

"I won't. How's your leg? That's the most serious question."

"Better—much better. I'm a th-th-thousand times obliged to you. I must go now, but before I go may I ask a favor?"

"Why, certainly."

"S-show me around New York. I've been d-dying to go round with a d-detective for I don't know how long."

Harry laughed.

"I'm afraid I'm hardly detective enough to suit you. I've only—"

"L-look! There she is!" cried Dionysius, suddenly interrupting.

"Who?"

"Miss M-M-Mugg."

Sure enough, there was the girl at the window above the fence. It was the first time Harry had ever seen her appear there at night.

But he had scarcely looked when he perceived that Miss Mugg was much agitated.

She had thrown up her window, looking straight at his, and as the lighted gas-jet behind them must have shown her the two young men distinctly, it was impossible to imagine that the quick gesture which she now made could have been intended for any one else.

"Open the window—open the window, quick!" the movement of her hands seemed to say.

At least so Harry interpreted it, and he quickly threw up the sash.

Now the distance between Miss Mugg and himself, as they stood at their respective windows, was not great—not over twenty-five feet at the most.

As Harry looked toward the girl he could see that she was as pale as death and trembling violently. Now she had clasped her hands together, her face wore an expression of horror impossible to describe.

"Is anything the matter?" called Harry, quite regardless of the neighbors.

Miss Mugg's lips seemed to move, but no sound issued from between them.

She unclasped her hands and clutched the window-sill, then suddenly throwing back her head there broke from her an awful cry, which, in the stillness of the midnight hour, must have made itself heard for a block around.

"Murder! Murder! Murder!"

Three times was the cry repeated.

Then suddenly Miss Mugg seemed to sink down behind the window ledge.

In a single second she had disappeared.

CHAPTER IV.

"NIX! NIX! NIX!"

Heard in the silence of the night, in the crowded districts of the great city, what so fearful and awe-inspiring as the cry of murder?

But a moment before the most complete silence had reigned in the rear of that block on the Bowery, but now all at once the whole aspect of the scene had changed.

In every direction windows were thrown up, and heads thrust out into the rain.

Instead of every one on the block being in bed and asleep, as might reasonably have been supposed, it seemed just as if every one had been wide awake, and waiting for Miss Mugg to shriek from her window that fearful cry.

"What's the matter?"

"Who hollered?"

"Where is it?"

These and similar questions Harry Shaw and Dionysius De Silver could hear them asking one another as they still remained staring at the opening from which that beautiful countenance had just vanished, too startled to move.

Harry was the first to recover himself.

"I must go to her!" he exclaimed. "That girl is in danger—dead, perhaps—and I—"

He would have leaped through the window, although the distance down to Mr. Isaacs' back yard was fully twenty feet, had not De Silver caught him and pulled him back.

"Are you m-mad?" he said. "You'll b-break your n-neck!"

"Let go of me!"

"No, I won't, unless you promise to be sensible."

"Let go of me, I say! Let go!"

"L-l-look!" cried Dionysius suddenly. "By G-George! the house is on fire! See! See!"

It was plain enough that Dionysius was right.

Out through the window from which Miss Mugg had just vanished a thick black smoke had begun pouring, and the crackling of flames could be distinctly heard.

It was quite useless to attempt to restrain Harry further.

A drop of twenty feet seemed nothing to him then, and tearing himself free he flung his legs through the window, clutched the sill for an instant, and then let go his hold.

"H-heavens! He's mad!" exclaimed Dionysius. "He'll be killed to a certainty."

But no.

Harry struck the pavement of the yard, and in a moment was on his feet, and bounding like a deer toward the high fence.

He had just reached it when the tailor flung up his window in his story above and began shouting fire at the top of his lungs.

It is doubtful if Harry even heard him.

His whole soul filled with thoughts of the girl, he was bent only upon scaling the fence and reaching the window of the mysterious house in the rear.

And this was no easy thing to do.

To climb upon the fence from the ground was entirely out of the question; to reach the top from the fence which divided the tailor's yard from the one next beyond, was within the bounds of possibility, though even this seemed likely to prove difficult in the extreme.

Climbing the lower fence, Harry ran nimbly along the top, and reached the higher one.

Here came the real difficulty, for the top of the higher fence was at least ten feet above his head.

Nevertheless he leaped up and caught it, clinging for a moment desperately; then, with a mighty effort, he drew himself up, crawled along until he was on a level with the window of the house behind.

The window was open, and through it the smoke was pouring in a suffocating volume, yet Harry did not hesitate even here.

A space of perhaps four feet separated the window from the fence, and he leaped boldly across it, seizing the sash and holding on.

In another instant he had disappeared within.

But difficulties were increasing.

It was pitch dark in the room; the loud crackling noise now plainly heard told the detective that the fire was in the room beyond.

Fortunately Harry was provided with a pocket-lantern, though as yet he had never been called upon to use it.

This he now lighted hurriedly and flashed it about in the full expectation of seeing Miss Mugg's body lying stretched upon the floor.

But he saw nothing of the sort.

One glance about the room showed him that the girl was not there, and the open door at the end seemed to point out the avenue of her escape.

The apartment was small and plainly furnished as a bedroom. There was a table, two chairs, a bureau, a cot in one corner, and a few odds and ends upon the mantelpiece, but the floor was bare and the general aspect of the place poverty-stricken to the last degree.

Harry did not pause to examine it closely. Pushing through the door he hurried into the hall.

Out from the room beyond the flames were pouring, and the smoke now grew so dense that there was nothing for it but to beat a retreat downstairs.

"Hello, there. Is any one here?" shouted the detective, as he gained the lower landing.

For an instant there was no answer.

Then all at once a strange cry was heard, which seemed to come upon Harry's ears with a muffled sound.

"Nix! Nix! Nix!"

This was the cry.

Heard under the surrounding conditions, the sound was most unearthly.

Presently it was repeated.

"Nix! Nix! Nix!"

Utterly at a loss to guess what it could mean, Harry flung open the nearest door and dashed into the room beyond.

Already he had noticed that the outer door leading to the alley stood wide open, and he had come to the conclusion that Miss Mugg, if herself uninjured, must have made her escape to the street to give the alarm.

He did not expect to see her, therefore, but he was none the less unprepared for the sight which now met his gaze—murder had been committed beyond a doubt, and in this very room, for there stretched upon the floor, bleeding profusely from a stab wound in the side, lay the remains of a short, thick-set man with an unusually large head.

It was Mr. Mugg!

The room, no larger than the one upstairs, was more comfortably furnished.

Evidently it had been used as parlor, sitting-room and dining-room combined.

In the middle of the floor a table stood spread for a meal. There was an old sofa, a few chairs; a clock ticked on the mantel, and a parrot was screaming furiously from behind the bars of a tin cage.

"Nix! Nix! Nix!"

In spite of the terrible sight upon which his eyes still rested, the detective could not help smiling at the superstitious fears which had been awakened within him when he first heard that cry.

But was it the parrot?

Just then the bird became quiet, and at the same instant the strange cry was taken up again, still having the muffled sound and seemingly coming from beneath Harry's feet:

"Nix! Nix! Nix!"

"Confound that bird!" muttered the detective, for although he could not see the creature's head move, he still believed that it had uttered the cry.

He was quickly undeceived, however, for the next instant the bird ruffled its feathers, and with an entirely different intonation took up the word, repeating it three times over:

"Nix! Nix! Nix!"

Harry felt his blood run cold.

While he was still wondering several persons came dashing through the alley and burst into the house.

They were neighbors; the saloon-keeper on the other side of the alley led the van.

All were intensely excited, and in the first breath would have seized upon Harry Shaw as murderer and incendiary, but the sight of his shield and the explanation he gave soon straightened matters out as far as that went, and then the firemen arrived and took things in hand.

Meanwhile Harry had not remained idly in the room where the body of the unfortunate Mr. Mugg had been discovered, but on the contrary had pushed on to the kitchen, the shed outside, and even made the effort to get upstairs again in the hope of finding Miss Mugg.

He had, however, discovered no trace of the girl below, and to explore the regions above was too much like forcing

one's way into a fiery furnace even for one so badly smitten as himself, and he was obliged to give up the attempt.

By this time the lower story and the courtyard was crowded.

A policeman had appeared, and the body of Mr. Mugg was carried out.

Through the alley a hose had been run, and the firemen were turning a stream in at the upper windows.

Not often were firemen more promptly on the scene. It was scarce five minutes since Harry had entered the house, and now he was just on the point of leaving, when all at once he heard that strange cry again, this time coming more faintly:

"Nix! Nix! Nix!"

It proceeded from the cellar—now there was no doubt of it. Besides, an excited citizen had taken the parrot out; so this time it could not possibly be laid to the bird.

No one but Harry seemed to notice it, but he, resolved to know what it meant, had made a dash for the cellar door.

The door was not locked, and the young detective wrenching it open, was in the act of dashing downstairs when some one caught his coat-tails from behind.

"S-s-say," stammered the voice of Mr. De Silver, "d-d-did you f-f-find the girl? Great heavens, what a t-terrible thing! They s-s-say there's a man m-murdered, and—"

"Let go of me!" shouted Harry, tearing himself free. "Come on, if you want to, but let go."

"Nix! Nix! Nix!"

Again the cry was heard.

It certainly came from the cellar, and had a most plaintive sound.

Down the stairs rushed the detective with the stuttering Dionysius after him.

They had scarcely reached the foot of the stairs when some one suddenly sprang past, coming from the left of the stairs, making for the other side of the cellar.

"Hold on there!" shouted Harry, whipping out his pocket-lantern and flashing it before him.

He was just in time to catch sight of a tall, elderly man, handsomely dressed, dragging after him a younger man whose face was turned away from him, standing against the end wall, but even as he looked the light suddenly went out, and through the cellar rang again that strange cry:

"Nix! Nix! Nix!"

"Great heavens!" Harry heard De Silver suddenly exclaim; then followed a harsh, grating sound, and all was still.

"Hold on there! If you move a step I shall fire!" cried Harry.

He was sure that he had seen the murderer of Mr. Mugg, and in spite of the risk which he knew he ran, he determined to stand his ground and capture him were it a possible thing.

There was no answer.

Harry bravely pulled out his match-safe and struck a light. It was no use to try to start up his lantern again, for he now remembered that it needed oil.

Holding up the match, expecting every instant to hear a pistol discharged and perhaps to feel the bullet, he was amazed to discover that the two men had disappeared.

"Great heaven!" breathed Dionysius again, forgetting to stutter in his amazement. "That was my father! Where has he gone? What does it mean?"

What, indeed?

There was no one in the cellar but themselves.

CHAPTER V.

A MURDERED MILLIONAIRE.

"Your father! Man, you must be crazy!"

Thus exclaimed Harry Shaw in response to Dionysius De Silver's singular words.

"N-no, I ain't. It was my f-f-father!"

"Is anybody down cellar?" called a voice from above before Harry had time to reply.

It was the voice of a policeman, and one whom Harry happened to know.

In a moment he had joined them, when Harry, answering, had pronounced his own name.

"Is it you, Mr. Shaw?"

"Yes, yes. Quick! Here, you've got a lantern?"

"Yes."

"Out with it."

The lantern light flashed by.

"There were two men here a second ago! They've hidden themselves somewhere," cried Harry. "I suppose you know there's murder been done at this house; perhaps these men are the perpetrators of the crime."

"Sure then and I don't see where they could have hid," replied the officer, flashing his lantern about.

It was indeed difficult to decide, for there seemed absolutely no chance for concealment in the part of the cellar which lay before them.

The cellar was perfectly clean, and absolutely bare of everything.

The walls were constructed of huge stones—much larger than those usually employed in foundations—and there seemed no possible avenue by which the two men seen by Harry could have escaped.

But the careful search which followed brought no explanation of the mystery; indeed it revealed nothing until in the circuit of the walls they came to an open door which communicated with a small room, little bigger than a good-sized closet, built under the stairs.

"Flash your light in here, officers," cried Harry. "I must see what this place contains."

He did not expect to find the two men in the room—he knew that this was entirely out of the question, for they could not have got there without passing him, and he was positive that they had not found him.

Nor was he disappointed.

The room was untenanted, but when the light was turned upon its interior Harry had every reason to be surprised.

Evidently the place had been occupied by some one as a bedroom. There was a rude cot on one side and a chair, which beside a tin wash-basin and a stone jug, with a little water in it, was absolutely all the room contained.

But aside from the strangeness of finding a bedroom in the cellar, the construction of the apartment was most peculiar.

The walls were of inch planking, the door was double this thickness, and away up near the ceiling, out of reach of an ordinary man, for the cellar was unusually deep, was a little round window, into which was fitted an extraordinarily thick pane of opaque glass.

This was all.

"It looks like a cell," muttered the officer, "but now there's no one here. You must have been mistaken, Mr. Shaw."

"I was not mistaken," cried Harry. "I saw two men—this gentleman saw them, too."

"I certainly did," breathed Dionysius.

It was the first word he had spoken since the descent of the officer, when he caught Harry's arm, whispering:

"For heaven's sake, don't say anything now. Perhaps I was mistaken about its being father. I must have been."

Was he mistaken?

Certainly it seemed altogether probable that such must have been the case.

What possible business could have brought Antonio De Silver, one of New York's richest men, into that cellar in the dead of night, and under such strange circumstances as these?

But it was impossible to remain in the cellar any longer, for now the heat of the place had become suffocating.

"Come, I want to talk to you," whispered Harry to his companion when they gained the court-yard.

They were the last to leave. Now the firemen were in full charge.

Now, in spite of the long time we have taken to tell it, probably not more than a quarter of an hour had elapsed since the moment Miss Mugg had first startled them with that fearful cry.

Soon it was all over.

The fire was extinguished, the old house stood a mass of blackened ruins.

The firemen passing through every room had reported the place entirely unoccupied, save for the body of the murdered man.

The captain of the precinct had arrived, and Harry had reported his discoveries in detail, concealing only the hasty exclamation of Dionysius De Silver, and there to his disgust the young detective found that his part in the matter had come to a sudden end.

"I suppose I can take hold of this case, captain?" he had said timidly.

"No," growled the captain. "It is too serious a matter for a beginner. Mr. Shaw, you can report to the inspector in the morning. There has been murder done here. I shall

recommend Snyder. He's an old hand at these mysterious cases. You may be detailed to help him, perhaps."

No wonder Harry was disgusted.

He left the scene by the alley and walked along Elizabeth street, followed by Dionysius, to whom he had as yet scarcely found time to speak since they left the cellar.

When they reached the corner he stopped and tried to shake him off, for he had fully determined in the last ten minutes to resign his shield next morning.

It was no use. They were all against him. Even when a case of some importance came tumbling into his hands, he was not to be permitted to work it up, it seemed.

But in the midst of his disappointed reflections there arose the image of Miss Mugg.

What had become of the girl if she had not perished in the flames?

"I'm going back to my room, and I suppose you are going home," he said, dejectedly. "Of course you were mistaken about that man we saw being your father. As for the girl, she must have had a hand in the evil business, since she took such precious good care to run away. Good-night."

But the first words of his companion aroused the young detective to something like his old ambition; made him feel, as it were, that if he wanted distinction he must earn it; showed him that it never could be acquired by idly giving up and folding his arms.

"S-s-ay, Mr. Shaw, d-d-don't you think those f-f-fellows that tried to carry off the g-girl are at the bottom of this?"

"Of course they are!" cried Harry, starting at the thought. "Why didn't I think of it before?"

"I—I thought of it at once. Look here!"

"Well?"

"I'm half wild. I—I know that it was my f-father we saw in the cellar. For heaven sake, what can it m-mean?"

"Why, you said we thought you were mistaken."

"I know it. I—I was scared. I—"

"Speak out, man!"

"I—I don't know what to say. I—I only know that it was father. I'll swear to it!"

"But what was he doing there? Where could he have gone?"

"I—I am sure I don't know any more than you do. I only know it was f-father—that's all."

"Did you recognize the other man?"

"No."

"And I," mused Harry, "scarcely had a glimpse of him when the lantern went out. I only know that he looked like a young man, but even that I can't be sure of, for I didn't see his face."

"It's very mysterious."

"Very."

"I can't imagine wha-what my father could have been doing there."

"Well, I'm sure I can't. You ought to know him better than I."

"N-no. I d-don't know him at all," answered Dion. He's liberal enough with me, but he rarely ever speaks to me. Upon my wor-word, I've said more to-to you to-night, Mr. Shaw, than I have to my f-father in a month."

"Why, how is that?"

"I can't tell you—it was always so."

"And your mother?"

"Died before I remember. My father and I live alone up there in that big house with the servants. I h-hate it. Oh, how I h-hate it. No wonder I'm about t-town all the time. If I could help it I would n-never go home again."

A sudden thought flashed across the mind of the young detective.

Why not take up the case on his own account, and see what he could make out of it?

If such action brought his dismissal from the force what did it matter, since he was resolved to get out anyhow.

A visit to this surly millionaire might reveal something.

He would go to him boldly and demand an explanation of his presence in the cellar of the mysterious house behind the fence.

"Look here!" he exclaimed suddenly, turning to Dion, "I want to see your father."

"You c-can see him for all me."

"I want to see him to-night—now, at once. If he was actually in the cellar, I want to know what he has got to say for himself. Let's take a cab and go to his house at once."

"It won't d-do you any good. He won't see you."

"You forget that I am a detective. I have the right to demand an explanation."

"B-but the case ain't in your hands."

"No matter. I am going to take it in hand. If you don't want to go with me I'll go alone."

"Oh, I'll go. But the girl?"

"We can do nothing about the girl to-night."

"I h-hope nothing serious has h-happened to her."

"You may be sure there has. But what can we do?"

"Nothing, I suppose. Come on. We'll go up and interview the old man, or at least you shall. I c-can't have anything to do with it and I w-won't."

It was a bold resolve.

Little did Harry Shaw fancy that in taking it he was taking the first step on the road to a successful career as a detective officer. But can any of us read the future? No, not one.

It was still raining as fast as ever, and when the two young men reached the Bowery it suddenly increased to a downpour, which threatened to drench them to the skin in spite of Dion's umbrella, unless they found immediate shelter.

"There's a cab!" exclaimed Dion, catching sight of an empty vehicle which happened to be passing. Harry hailed it, and they were speedily inside.

"No. — Fifth avenue, corner of 2-th street," was the order hastily given by De Silver.

A moment later and they were rattling uptown.

Once started on his bold project, Harry's courage, in a measure, began to fail him.

Was it not altogether likely that his companion had been mistaken?

What should he say to Mr. De Silver even if he succeeded in obtaining an interview?

These and a thousand similar reflections were coursing through his brain.

Meanwhile his companion had grown silent, scarcely speaking until the cab drew up beside the large, handsome brown-stone mansion. The driver leaped down from the box and opened the door.

Just then a neighboring church clock struck one.

"Here we are!" exclaimed Dionysius, who was the first to step out.

"Let me pay for the carriage and I'll be with you," said Harry.

"No, no, I'll settle it, I've g-got more money than I know what to d-do with. Three dollars? All right, there you are. Now, Mr. Shaw, come on."

He took Harry's arm familiarly and hurried toward the steps.

"Do you know," he whispered, "I'm all in a tremble? I feel just as though something were going to happen."

Harry made no answer, for the fact was he did not feel much better himself. He had begun to feel some suspicious of his companion also.

Had he told the truth?

Was his motive in following up Miss Muggs, of Elizabeth street, really what he had stated?

While the young detective was reflecting upon this they reached the door.

Mr. De Silver drew a latch-key from his pocket and thrust it into the lock.

"If the old gentleman is up I'll see him and explain why he—he m-ust see you," he said, "b-but if he's gone to b-bed, I can't wake him. I'd expect to have my head knocked off if I did. Botheration, what's the matter with this key?"

"What's the trouble?"

"I can't turn it."

"Does it stick?"

"N-never did before."

"Perhaps you've got it in upside down."

"N-no, I haven't. It's all right. Thunder! The door is open! The l-lock is s-sprung back!"

He flung back the heavy oaken door as he spoke, revealing a large and handsomely furnished hall, lighted by a single gas-jet which burned low beneath a deep crimson shade.

"I can't understand it," whispered Dionysius. "The old gentleman is always mighty particular about the fastenings, and John, the butler, is a perfect crank."

"But there's a light burning in the library," he added, pointing along the hall to an open door at its end; "father must be up. Always keeps that door locked, too; s-something's wrong."

[TO BE CONTINUED]

THROUGH INDIA ON BICYCLES

OR,

The Adventures of Two American Boys

By DICK ELLISON

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER IV.

FIGHT WITH THE TIGER—THE RESULT.

Harry was the first to see the new danger.

He was looking ahead to make sure that his wheel would not come against any obstacle.

Jack was still riding with head turned, glancing back at the tiger.

"We're lost!" shouted Harry.

The cry and the tone in which it was uttered caused Jack to turn round instantly. He looked ahead. As he did so a horror-stricken expression came over his face.

Death was in front and behind, and it seemed impossible to escape it.

It was here that Jack's quickness of mind well served himself and his chum.

He took in at a glance the extreme peril of the situation, and almost as quickly he formed a plan.

"Turn to the left!" he shouted, frantically.

Harry mechanically obeyed him, not knowing why this action was taken except to avoid a precipice.

He swept furiously round on his wheel, making a great circle as he did so.

At the same time Jack turned to the right, performing a similar evolution. Both boys dismounted.

The tiger was now close up.

The brute could not stop himself in time to spring upon either of the boys.

Jack was in hopes that the speed at which the monster was going would send him over the abyss.

But there was no such luck.

On the brink the tiger managed to stop himself, though he had a very narrow escape from destruction, his head literally hanging over the precipice.

Now Harry realized the utility of his chum's maneuver.

The boys were about forty yards apart. The tiger was between them.

The monarch of the jungle glared from one to the other with a ferocious expression on his face.

Bang!

Harry took what he considered to be careful aim and fired.

A first shot at a tiger is generally a failure. The nerves of the strongest man tremble at such an unusual encounter. What wonder then that Harry's shot failed to kill?

But it did not altogether miss.

The bullet struck the tiger on the shoulder, missing the head, at which it was aimed, and inflicting a severe but not fatal wound.

The pain further infuriated the savage brute, and utterly disregarding Jack, he set off as hard as he could travel towards Harry.

The boy was standing behind the stump of a large tree, and as the tiger came towards him, he knelt on one knee and rested his rifle on the tree-stump.

Jack rushed towards Harry, and paused when he saw the tiger within a few yards of his friend.

Then he fired. At the same instant Harry fired also.

Apparently the tiger was not further injured. His career was not stayed. He was within four yards of the stump. Harry, with an empty rifle in his hand, was before him, powerless to defend himself further.

The tiger leaped on his prey.

As he did so Harry cowered down beneath the shelter of the stump to avoid a blow from the claws of the ferocious beast.

His action saved him. Over his head the tiger passed, his furious leap taking him many feet beyond the boy.

Harry knew it was only a brief respite from death. The monster would turn and then the end would come.

"Keep still!" cried a voice.

It was Jack who spoke.

As he did so, the tiger once more turned and faced the boys.

It was a situation calculated to try the nerves of the oldest hunter. But Jack was equal to the occasion.

Bang!

Aiming right at the forehead of the tiger, who was standing glaring at the prey he hoped soon to devour, Jack fired. The tiger made a movement forward, but his action lacked its former vigor and energy. The bullet had done its work. The monster rolled over dead.

It was some time before the boys recovered from the shock. The last ten minutes, the whole affair did not take longer, were the most unpleasant they had ever spent, and they certainly would never be forgotten.

"That was a close shave, Harry."

"For me, yes. If you'd missed, Jack, I'd have been a-goner!"

"How about me?" laughed Jack. "One blow of the tiger's paw would have settled you, then he'd have squared accounts with me without delay."

"We're having excitement, Jack."

"Yes; a little too much. If I don't meet with another tiger for a few weeks, I won't cry."

"Guess we'd better skin the brute. The skin is valuable. Beside, it will be a trophy."

"Don't see much good in doing that."

"Why not?"

"We can't carry the skin along with us."

"That's true. Still, I don't want to lose it."

"We'll cover the tiger over with some leaves, and note the spot. Then we'll surely meet with some of the natives. They'll be only too glad, for a small sum of money, to go back after the skin."

"You're right; that's a good plan."

Harry was about to get on his wheel.

"Here, what are you up to?"

"Why, going to start, to be sure."

"Oh, there's no hurry. Let's rest a bit. Besides, I'm hungry."

The boys wheeled their bicycles amid the trees.

Hearing the sound of running water, they searched until they came to a limpid stream. Tasting it, they found it cool and of excellent flavor, and sitting down by the bank of the stream, they made a very good meal off some crackers and fruit.

It was late in the afternoon before they left their cool retreat.

Having covered up the tiger with branches of trees, they once more got on their wheels and rode away.

Of course they had to retrace their steps.

The precipice had completely blocked them, and a careful investigation showed no way down its steep sides.

They rode fast along the hard road.

When they came to the sandy one, naturally their pace decreased. Very soon both the boys had had enough of it.

Still what could they do?

They were entire strangers in the land, and they feared to stray off the path.

At the same time it seemed madness to continue, for soon they would be utterly exhausted.

Night was coming on, and this of itself would practically compel them to halt.

The boys had dismounted and were discussing the question of where and how they should pass the night, when Harry called Jack's attention to a light shining amid the trees.

"A house!" he cried.

"What of that?"

"Why, we'll sleep there."

"The owner may object."

"Not if we pay him. They're mighty poor' and a little money goes a long way."

"It's certainly better than sleeping in the woods. I'm in no humor for another tiger hunt. Guess there's no danger. The people all seem well disposed. Get your wheel, we'll see what can be done."

A few minutes later the two boys rode up to the door of a small wooden house, roofed with branches of palm trees, and apparently not possessing a window.

The door stood open, and outside was a tall, lean Hindoo, smoking a pipe and gazing down the valley.

Immediately behind him a lamp was burning, and this was the light the boys had seen.

The Hindoo gave a cry of alarm as the two boys rode up, and he placed himself in an attitude of defense.

They speedily reassured him, and as it appeared that his alarm was occasioned by their bicycles, he was soon pacified when the matter was explained to him.

The ryot, for such the Hindoo peasant is called, had never seen a wheel before, and it took some time to initiate him into its mysteries.

The man spoke English fairly well, for he had come into contact, at some period of his life, as most natives do, with the English residents in Hindoostan.

"We want to sleep here to-night," said Jack.

"Poor bed, sahib not be satisfied."

"Great Scott! won't we?" cried Harry; "you try us. We've been sleeping on the bare earth lately, and I guess we're not mighty particular."

Jack wanted to end the discussion. He produced a handful of coin.

The eyes of the Hindoo glistened as he saw the money, but neither of the boys noticed the change that came over the man's face.

"I'll pay you well," said Jack.

"Poor Hindoo cannot say no."

the boys placed their wheels in a shed at the rear of the house. They then entered it.

The Hindoo placed a supper before them consisting of rice and fruit, which they found satisfactory, and having eaten it, they declared themselves ready for bed.

Lying down, Jack was soon asleep, but Harry lay awake listening to the talk that was going on between their host and a friend who had called at the hut.

The boy could not understand what was said, for the men were talking in the native tongue, but he did not like the manner of the speakers, or the way in which, from time to time, they looked in the direction in which he and Jack were.

Presently their host came over, and bent over the bed to satisfy himself that the boys were asleep. Jack was so, and Harry feigned to be.

The Hindoo seemed satisfied, for he had a smile on his face as he walked towards his friend.

Harry saw him put his finger on his eyes, as if to intimate that the boys were asleep, and at the same time he held up a few small silver coins, and pointed in the direction of the two sleepers.

Both men chuckled quietly. Then they left the hut.

In less than five minutes they returned, bearing with them a basket about a foot and a half in height. This they placed on the floor between the boys and the door.

Then glancing round with looks of satisfaction upon their faces, they left the hut, and the boy could hear their host locking the door.

Harry was thoroughly alarmed by these inexplicable proceedings, and as soon as he was left alone Harry woke up Jack.

CHAPTER V.

IN THE HINDOO'S HUT—AN ESCAPE—ARRIVAL AT TANJORE.

To be awakened from your first sleep is not pleasant. Jack was furious.

"Be quick, Jack, for Heaven's sake," exclaimed Harry, "we may be in danger, for all you know."

Harry's tone somewhat quieted Jack.

"What's in the wind now?" he said.

Harry told him everything that had happened.

"You're getting into a fever about nothing," said Jack, when his chum had concluded; "seems to me that tiger's been too much for your nerves, old man. Go to sleep and you'll be better in the morning. Good-night."

Harry grasped him by the arm.

"Say, Jack, I'm not going to let you sleep just yet. Listen to me. I tell you those two men have designs upon our pockets and possibly our lives. Their actions seemed to show it."

"Very likely," growled Jack, "if they really went through such a pantomime."

"If they went through it?"

"Certainly, Harry. I believe you were asleep, and that you dreamt all you've told me."

"Hist!"

Harry placed his hand on his chum's arm to keep him still.

"Listen to that noise," he said; "it's very strange."

Now Jack, incredulous through he was, could not gainsay Harry's remark. Both boys listened and Jack, throwing off his indifference, sat up in bed as his companion was doing.

The lamp still burned in the hut, but only feebly.

The mysterious noise that had attracted their attention continued.

Evidently it was in the direction of the door.

Harry glanced towards the basket, remembering that the two ryots had placed it in that part of the hut.

As he did so, his face became pale as death, and a look of speechless horror was upon his face.

For a moment he remained thus. Then he turned towards his chum, with the same expression on his features.

He seized Jack's hand.

"Look! Look!" he gasped.

Then fixing their gaze upon the basket as they sat up in the bed, Jack and Harry saw, gliding out on to the floor, two large cobras. The deadly snakes were coming towards them.

It is said that serpents possess the power of fascinating, or rather, of hypnotizing their victims.

From the boys' behavior it appeared that such was really the case.

For Jack and Harry sat mute and motionless.

Slowly the cobras came towards them, and suddenly the boys shook off the inertia that had come over them.

Both of them seized their guns, which they grasped by the barrels, and at the same time they sprang out of bed.

The two snakes were within a few feet by this time, and simultaneously they raised themselves up preparatory to striking, looking horrible with their protruding tongues.

"Now!" cried Jack.

The two boys swung round their rifles.

They aimed well. Neither of the snakes escaped, for the force of the blows broke their backs in two, and they lay helpless and writhing on the floor.

A few more blows and they were dead.

"By Heaven!" ejaculated Harry, "this beats tiger hunting!"

"If you hadn't been awake those reptiles would have bitten us in our sleep, and their bite always means death."

"So you don't think I was dreaming, Jack?"

"No. Great Scott! and I tell you what, Harry, we're in an awkward fix, for those two Hindoos mean mischief. How to get out of this place passes my comprehension," for you say the door's locked."

"Yes."

The first thing the boys did was to make sure that the basket was empty. Having satisfied themselves that they had nothing further to fear from cobras and other snakes, they had a good look round the hut to try and find a way out.

The door was securely fastened, and as was said before, there was no window to the building.

What was to be done?

Outside, the boys could now hear their treacherous host and his friend, though they only conversed in whispers.

Evidently the proceedings in the hut had attracted their attention, and they realized that their horrible scheme had failed. No doubt the scoundrels were busily engaged in concocting further mischief.

Jack now was more angry than fearful.

His hot temper rendered him anything but calm, and he longed to be able to get at the two Hindoos and repay them for their treachery.

"Once out," said Jack, "the thing's easy. With our guns we're more than a match for those wretches, and they won't dare to attack us."

"We must get out quickly," said Harry.

"The morning's time enough," exclaimed Jack, "then we'll see what we're doing. I'm in no hurry."

"That's all very well, but it's quite likely that these scoundrels will have assistance before long, and we'll have to fight a big crowd."

"True, true. I never thought of that. Hulloa!"

"What's the matter?"

"I see a way out of this crib."

"Out with it!"

"Why, through the roof, to be sure. I noticed it when I came in, and it's only a lot of branches of the palm tree."

"Good! we'll get to work at once."

The boys pulled a table over and standing upon it their heads more than touched the roof, and they were compelled to bend down.

Jack's scheme was entirely successful. And it was very easy. The materials of which the roof was made offered little resistance. In a few minutes they had thrust a hole through.

Jack was the first to crawl out upon the roof.

His head had no sooner appeared than something whistled by him. It was a spear. Jack had a narrow escape.

Quick as lightning he sprang right up, rifle in hand, and looked around him.

He saw the treacherous Hindoo and his friend near some trees, and raising his rifle to his shoulder the boy fired. The Hindoos were too quick for him, for they had disappeared behind the trees in time to save themselves.

Jack covered these trees with his rifle until Harry joined him on the roof.

Then, the two boys sprang to the ground and hurried off to the shed where they had left their wheels.

"By jove! not touched," exclaimed Harry. "I expected to see them smashed to prevent us getting away."

"Well, they're not, so we'll clear off. Come."

The boys rode rapidly away on their bicycles, holding a six-shooter in readiness to defend themselves in case of attack.

But they proceeded in peace. The Hindoos had a wholesome fear of powder and shot, and the boys were unmolested. Two hours later they lay down to rest beneath some trees, and about two hundred yards off the road.

In the middle of the night Jack was awakened by feeling some hot breath upon his cheek.

Looking up, he saw a hairy, hideous face close to his, and two eyes, like balls of fire, glaring at him.

Jack knew it was a savage animal of some description, and if it was a tiger it must have been a young one on account of its size.

The boy knew his peril.

So long as he stayed still the savage animal might not attack him, but this was only a supposition. For at any moment he might feel the claws of the brute at his throat.

He was almost paralyzed with horror. But it was no time to allow fear to master him. Rather must he pull himself together.

The boy had gone to sleep grasping his six-shooter.

He determined to use it now. One shot must do the work, for if it failed he would probably not live to fire another.

Raising his six-shooter with a lightning-like movement he pressed the muzzle against his savage foe and fired.

Bang!

The shot seemed to wake up the forest. Certainly it woke Harry.

He sprang to his feet, glancing wildly around.

Then he saw a savage animal struggling on the ground in the throes of death, and Jack, pistol in hand, standing near.

Jack put another bullet in the head of the animal and killed the creature, which was already mortally wounded.

Very soon after daylight came, and they saw that the dead brute was a cheetah—a species of leopard—no match for an armed man ready for the encounter, but a formidable opponent under such circumstances as those in which he met with Jack.

Once more the journey was resumed.

Many weary days of traveling to the north took place—days of absolute quietude compared to the stirring times that had passed.

At length, just before evening fell, amid the wondering looks of the Hindoos who had crowded the skirts of the place, the two boys, at a rapid pace, entered the large and populous city of Tanjore.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RAJAH OF TANJORE TRIES TO RIDE A BICYCLE.

The picturesque dresses of the people, and the oriental character of the houses and shops attracted the attention of the boys, for it was all strange to them.

But they did not have much time to dwell upon these matters. Nor did they desire to do so now.

It was their intention to stay two or three days in the city, for there were many objects of interest to be seen.

The streets were ill-paved and dirty, but they continued on their way at a good pace, not knowing what their destination was to be.

They had some idea that they might strike an English hotel. But all was uncertainty.

Suddenly two men dressed in uniform and wearing swords, rushed out into the middle of the road.

One of them, uttering some words which were lost upon the boys because of the tongue he employed, grasped the handle of Harry's wheel, bringing him heavily to the ground.

Jack, seeing what had happened, dismounted.

This was certainly a different reception to what they had anticipated.

By this time three or four men similarly dressed to the two others, had come up. They talked vigorously in their own language, and used threatening gestures.

The boys were lost in astonishment.

They knew of nothing they had done which would subject them to such treatment.

Two men had seized Harry and two others had taken possession of Jack.

The boys knew better than to make a resistance which was bound to be ineffectual and would certainly result seriously for them.

They allowed themselves to be led away.

True, they protested vigorously, but the officers did not, or at any rate, assumed not to, understand their words.

Wondering what would be the end of this affair, they found themselves conducted to a large stone building, and in a few minutes they were standing in front of an old white-haired and white-bearded Hindoo, who, clothed in turban and long flowing robes, gravely looked at them from a raised dais.

"I say," whispered Harry; "this is the judge."

"Hope it's not a hanging matter," muttered Jack.

The judge and the officers did a lot of talking.

No doubt the latter were presenting the facts of the case.

"Must be we are riding too fast," said Harry quietly to Jack.

"Shut up! We'll soon know!"

The old judge spoke English, and when he found the two boys were American he addressed them in that tongue.

His manners were severe, his words were harsh. Apparently they could hope for no indulgence from him.

"Young men," he said, "you have committed a very serious crime. To ride through the city at this season is a nonsense against Buddha, and you must pay the penalty."

"But we have done no wrong," cried Harry.

"How could we know this law existed?" added Jack.

"That matters not," said the judge. "I will have to sentence you to imprisonment."

Jack was boiling over with rage.

He was about to threaten the old judge with the wrath of Uncle Sam, when there was a commotion in court.

Some one was endeavoring to make his way through the crowd of officials that had collected around the prisoners, and so vigorous were the movements of the intruder, that he succeeded in his object.

The judge was furious. His dignity was hurt.

"Take that fellow," he cried, "and give him a taste of the bastinado!"

The officers of the court threw themselves upon the man.

"Most High and Mighty Excellency," cried the man they had seized, "I am a servant of the Rajah. I bear a message from him."

The effect upon those in court was instantaneous.

They loosed their hold and allowed the man to go free.

Jack and Harry turned round, and to their intense surprise they saw that the man who had spoken was Ram Chunder.

The judge lost no time in reading the message that the Hindoo had brought with him. As he had stated it came from the Rajah, and it commanded the judge to send his two prisoners to the palace without delay.

Going there, Ram Chunder walked alongside the two boys and conversed with them.

"You've got a habit of turning up at the right moment, Rainmee," said Jack. "How'd you manage it?"

"Sahibs, Ran Chunder promised to meet you in Tanjore. That is all."

"But how about the Rajah?"

"I am now employed at the palace. His highness heard of the sahibs and the wonderful things on which they rode. He

wants to see you. Act discreetly and you will be safe. That is all."

By this time they had entered the grounds of the palace, and they started around them perfectly bewildered at the magnificence of the scene.

Before they had recovered from their surprise, they found themselves in the palace itself.

Through long lines of servants, holding glaring torches, they went. All was glare and glitter.

Hundreds of lamps hung from the ceilings of the apartments they traversed, and bright jewels on the turbans and robes of the palace attendants.

At the end of a long hall, magnificently dressed, reclined in Oriental fashion, a stout, swarthy, black-bearded man.

This was the Rajah of Tanjore.

The two boys were brought before him and he addressed them in English, commanding them to bring their bicycles sufficiently near for him to see them.

This they did, and Jack, at the request of the Rajah, explained the working of the wheel.

The Rajah, who was a man of little education, could not comprehend the explanation.

"Your highness!" said Jack, "if you please, I and my friend, Harry Lindon, will ride round this hall so that you may see how we manage these strange steeds."

"Do so," was the brief answer.

The Rajah and his courtiers remained mute with astonishment at what to them was an amazing spectacle. Never had they seen a bicycle, and therefore their surprise is not to be wondered at.

The boys were both good riders, and Jack could do some trick riding.

The latter caused a short of amazement to go up from the crowd.

"Silence!" thundered the Rajah.

He rose from his silken couch, and commanded the boys to draw near.

"What's in the wind now?" thought Jack.

He was not kept long in suspense.

The Rajah intended to ride one of the wheels.

"Your highness," cried Harry, "it cannot be done. You must not attempt it! You can't ride as we have done. It requires practice."

"Dog!" shouted the Rajah, looking at him with a savage expression upon his face; you dare to speak thus to me? Think you the Rajah of Tanjore will fail at something in which a white dog can succeed?"

It was useless to argue with the infuriated prince, though both the boys realized that the consequences would be disastrous not only to themselves, but to the Rajah himself.

With beating hearts they awaited events.

The Rajah took Jack's wheel, and ran it along the middle of the great hall as he had seen the young American do.

Then, amid a hush, he placed his foot on the step and sprang into the saddle.

The courtiers and the soldiers raised their voices in ecstasy at the achievement of their ruler.

They were premature.

With a mighty crash the dreaded Rajah came to the ground, the wheel he had vainly attempted to ride falling upon him.

Jack and Harry rushed forward as looks of consternation fell on every one.

The boys removed the wheel from the Rajah's body, and his servants assisted him to rise.

The aspect of his face appalled the two young Americans. He was livid with passion, and his lips worked convulsively.

His feelings were natural to a man of his barbarous nature. Accustomed to be worshipped as a god by his people, he had now been humiliated in presence of his entire court.

"What shall be done with these two dogs?" he asked in awful tones, addressing his remarks to a man who was apparently his chief minister.

"Let them be put to the torture," was the instant answer.

"They are controlled by the Evil One," said another old man. "Your Highness should destroy them and the mysterious machines upon which they ride. They are enemies of Buddha!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE RAJAH'S DAUGHTER—ESCAPE FROM THE DUNGEON.

The commotion in the hall was indescribable.

Standing at the foot of the dais amid a group of courtiers was the Rajah.

The angry potentate was endeavoring to make his voice heard above the tumult that prevailed.

He watched the attempt of the two boys to escape with no uneasiness, for he knew that it was impossible for them to do so.

The boys had reached the same conclusion.

They were bound to stop. If they had proceeded they would have impaled themselves upon the spears of the men who barred the way from the great building.

Instantly they dismounted, and pale, though not dismayed, the two young Americans stood and faced the angry throng.

It was difficult to restrain the soldiers.

They had seen the Rajah, whom they worshipped as a god, thrown violently to the earth from the bicycle he had attempted to ride.

And they wished to execute vengeance upon the person who had caused the mishap.

Ram Chunder ran to where the Rajah stood.

The poor Hindoo threw himself upon the ground at the feet of the Indian prince.

Piteously he pleaded for the lives of the two boys.

The Rajah turned a deaf ear to what he said.

"Take the slave!" he cried, pointing to Ram Chunder, "and beat him with whips."

But the words were only indistinctly heard in the tumult that prevailed, and Ram Chunder was saved for the time.

Again he spake to the Rajah.

"Most exalted highness," he said, prostrating himself before the dusky monarch; "touch not these boys. If you do trouble will come of it. They are of the American nation, and the Stars and Stripes will protect them."

The veins on the brow and neck of the Rajah were almost bursting, so great was the restraint he was putting upon himself.

He had sufficient command of himself to see that the Hindoo had spoken words of wisdom.

Certainly it would not do to put these boys to death, at least not openly. The Rajah realized that he would create endless trouble if he did so.

But, none the less, he was determined that they should not be spared.

He meant to kill them in such a manner that no one would know of the manner of their death, and so that their bodies might not be found.

The people were now becoming still.

In loud tones the Rajah gave his orders.

"Take these white dogs!" he cried. "and cast them in the dungeon in the palace grounds. Look to it that they do not escape, or your lives shall answer for it."

Then disdaining to take any further notice of the prisoners, the Rajah, followed by his ministers, passed from the hall.

The two boys had never stirred.

Now they surrendered themselves quietly.

To do otherwise would have been madness.

They would have been cut to pieces speedily.

Surrounded by a guard of soldiers they were led through the grounds of the palace, and speedily they found themselves thrust into a dark dungeon, apparently below the surface of the earth.

A small lamp was furnished to them, and also some slight refreshment.

Then the door was closed upon them, and they were left to think over the morrow and what it would bring forth.

"This beats everything," said Harry.

"We're in an awful hole."

"Yes, but the worst is over."

"What makes you think so?"

"Why, the Rajah will cool down, and in the morning he'll begin to see that it's not a paying game to ill-treat American citizens."

"If he was civilized he would. But he's half a savage, and probably won't reason about it. Did you ever see a more bloodthirsty-looking old wretch, Harry?"

"Can't say I ever did."

Harry laughed loudly.

"What's the matter now?"

"Why, I was thinking of the figure he cut. By gosh! I'd almost go through this business again just for the fun of seeing his fat old body rolling on the ground. It was comical and no mistake."

Jack, notwithstanding the serious nature of his position, was bound to laugh, too. The recollection of the Rajah, being hurled from the wheel, was intensely ludicrous.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

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BRIEF, BUT POINTED.

Theodore W. Burham, a farmer living on a large tract of fertile land near Lawrenceburg junction, Ind., has set out several hundred young trees of a peculiar variety and a number of acres will be devoted to them. When the trees have obtained sufficient growth they will be sold to be made into umbrella handles and canes.

According to a report just issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, sixty wolves were killed in France during 1900. The majority of these animals were killed in the departments of the Vienne, Charente, and Haute-Vienne. The French government pays a reward varying from twenty to one hundred francs for each wolf.

The Sakais—the little wild people of Malays—do not reach a very high level in musical instruments, but with their nose flutes they often bring forth exceedingly sweet and melodious tones. In every quarter of the earth from the remotest times the familiar flute, blown with the mouth, is found; but the Sakais are probably the only people who play flutes with their noses. Occasionally a negro minstrel has been seen in this country who could play a flute with his nose, but it is a rare "stunt" and not a habitual practice as it is with the Sakais of Malaysia.

The Bergen tunnel under Jersey City Heights, through which for forty years all passenger trains on the Erie Railroad have been run, was abandoned on July 1st for passenger service, and will be given over wholly to the movement of freight. After that date passenger trains will make use of a great open-air, four-track cut, upon which the contractors have been at work for the past three years. The cut, which extends for 4,400 feet through the Heights, is 58 feet wide at the bottom, and varies from 45 to 85 feet in depth. It is intersected by four tunnels, where the material has been left in place to carry the streets above; but none of these is of greater length than an ordinary train.

The children of Public School 19 in Richmond Borough, New York City, are of the sort not to be easily defeated. They long ago discovered that the apparatus at their disposal was entirely inadequate, so they induced Principal Charles F. Simons to plan the apparatus they required. Then with the aid of the workshop teacher they built them in the school shop. For home-made apparatus they are surprisingly accurate and well finished. Among the articles are a scale which responds to a piece of paper placed in one pan and which may be set; apparatus for measuring the expansion of metals, an inclined plane with attached scale, a very delicate compass, a photometer, a colorimeter and a box with three rubber tissue covered holes to show that pressure increases with depth. These are used by the pupils in their experiments and cannot help but teach them the great lesson of self-reliance. This was well illustrated not long ago when they were being taught about the Panama Canal. Some of them could not clearly understand the lock system, so several boys got together and made a model lock to show how they worked.

John Burroughs, the bird lover, has advised the extermination of the English sparrow. Mr. Burroughs's advice is sound, but the difficulty is in finding a way to carry it out. Frank Bond, who is now chief clerk of the Department of the Interior in Washington, succeeded some years ago in killing all the English sparrows in Cheyenne, Wyo., and he did it with little cost and little trouble. Mr. Bond's plan of procedure was so simple that it can be put into use anywhere, but the chances are that no one will be allowed to adopt it and that the "avian rat" will continue to flourish in the land of its adoption. Not long ago a crusade against the sparrow was preached in Boston. The proof was at hand that the feathered immigrant was a nuisance, and that he drove away the native birds by sheer force of numbers, while doing none of the useful things which the natives would have done if they had been allowed a roosting place in the elms of the common and public garden. The English sparrow has no excuse for living. It is dirty, noisy and quarrelsome and it has an appetite which equals that of much larger birds.

OUR COMIC COLUMN.

"Women want to fill men's shoes now in everything." "Maybe that is why their feet have been getting so much larger."

"You never saw my hands as untidy as that," said Aunt Jane to Bessie. "No," replied Bessie, looking up, archly; "but your maid did."

Beggar (who has just received five cents)—Thank you, sir; Heaven will reward you fifty-fold. Giver—If I felt sure of that, my friend, I'd give you a dollar.

"What's the latest train on the Swamphurst road?" asked Citiman. "That's hard to say," replied Subbubs. "They're all late, but they vary so in their lateness."

"John, that man next door came over here to-day and offered to tune little Lucy's piano." "Great! Did you let him do it?" "No, dear. He wanted to tune it with an axe!"

Policeman (to clubman returning home late)—Here, you can't open the door with that; it's your cigar. Clubman—Great Scott! Then I have smoked my latchkey!

She (wearily)—My head aches awfully. He—What have you been doing? She—I've been trying to decide whether that bargain I got to-day at a bargain counter is a bargain or not.

A little lass with brown curls and in a gingham apron was sent out to search for eggs. Returning empty-handed, she complained that "lots of hens were standing around doing nothing."

Traveler in Parlor Car—Porter, that man in front will give you a quarter for dusting him off, won't he? Porter—Yessir! Traveler—Well, I'll give you half a dollar to leave the dust on him, and not brush it off on to me.

Mrs. D'Avnoo (indignantly)—What! Move out of the city and live in the suburbs? Indeed I won't—so there! Mr. D'Avnoo (who wants to economize)—My dear, a pretty woman like you never looks so charming as when sitting in a phaeton at a suburban railway station waiting for her husband. She went.

"How is the new filing system? Success?" asked the agent of the merchant to whom he had sold a "system" a few days before. "Great!" said the merchant. "Good!" said the agent, rubbing his hands. "And how is business?" "Business?" echoed the merchant. "Oh, we have stopped business to attend to the filing system."

"La me!" sighed Mrs. Partington, "here I have been suffering the bigamies of death for three mortal weeks. First I was seized with a bleeding phrenology in the left Hampshire of the brain, which was exceeded by a stoppage of the left ventilator of the heart. This gave me an inflammation in the borax, and now I'm sick with the chloroform morbus. There is no blessing like health, particularly when you're sick."

THE GREY SPECTER

By Col. Ralph Fenton

Pretty Elaine Billingford sat all alone in a roomy chamber in the ancient mansion which everybody supposed would be hers.

Her uncle, old Simon Billingford, had been dead two months, and Elaine had lived with him so long that the village folks all thought she would be his heiress.

Her parents had died when she was but a mere child, and she was left totally alone, having no brothers or sisters.

Old Simon Billingford had taken her under his roof, having no relatives of his own to speak of, never having married, and Elaine grew to be the light of the household, and in time directed all its affairs.

Consequently, when old Simon died, it was expected, of course, that Elaine would still be mistress of Castle Grim—as the place was called, on account of its somber appearance from the road.

For once, what everybody expected would happen did not do so.

In looking over the old man's papers, a will was found of very ancient date, which left everything to Horatio Billingford, a profligate nephew.

He was past forty, and a miserly specimen of humanity, crabbed, sour-tempered, a hard drinker, and a black sheep generally, having never finished sowing his wild oats and as devoid of the milk of human kindness as a stone.

He gambled, ran up big bills that he never paid, contracted debts that he never thought of redeeming, violated his word as often as the third Commandment, and was as grasping and grinding withal, to anyone that owed him money, as you could well imagine.

The will left everything to him, and Elaine was scarcely mentioned.

The indignation of the villagers knew no bounds, and they strongly advised Elaine to try to break the will.

"Old Hardfist," as Horatio was lovingly called, had not set foot within Castle Grim for no one knew how long, and when he heard of the will he had the effrontery to write to Elaine and tell her that she must find other quarters, as he wanted to live there himself.

He allowed her two months in which to leave, as he would be detained on business for that length of time, but intimated pretty strongly that on the first day of November he should expect to find the place vacant.

So on this last night in October, "Sweet Hallow E'en," Elaine sat in her chamber, by a cozy fire, thinking over all the pleasant times she had had in the old place, and wondering where she would go to.

It was a comfortable place inside, was Castle Grim, despite its name, the rooms being large and high, the halls spacious, the stairways wide and strong, and the wainscot of polished oak, walnut and ash, shining like brasswork.

There were quaint little nooks, and odd, irregular shaped corners, at unexpected places all over the house, and in the principal halls were solid marble and granite pillars flanking the doorways, the latter being all hung with heavy curtains, to keep out the cold, doors being provided in addition.

In fact, it was a wonderful house, and well might any beautiful young lady of nineteen be proud at the thought of becoming its mistress.

Many a time, in innocent pride, had she pictured herself and Richard Arnault presiding over it, and welcoming their numerous guests, and extending to them the hospitality of the grand old place.

Richard was the descendant of an old French family, and by his profession of the law, had laid up a tidy little fortune, though it was not nearly as large as Elaine's was supposed to be.

And all Elaine's day dreams had been rudely dissipated, and she was to leave the dear old home of her childhood, and go and live with strangers.

Search was made high and low for a will of later date, but none was found, and much to his disgust, Richard advised Elaine to leave the house and live with his mother, for his betrothed would not, for a moment, consent to the plan of trying to break the will.

She desired to spend this last night in the beloved mansion, and in her own room, and so she sat alone this wild night, a night so intimately associated with all that is mysterious, and conjured up the ghosts of happy days, long gone by.

She was in a half-doze, looking at the fire, which snapped and cracked in the large open fireplace, when suddenly she thought she heard a footstep outside, ascending the stairs.

Wondering who could be up so late an hour, she hastily arose, and going to the door pushed aside the rich curtains, and looked out.

The hall was dark save for the light of a single candle carried by the person whoever it was, that had disturbed her.

She advanced a step, the thick curtains falling noiselessly behind her, and peering from behind a pillar, saw the figure of a man dressed in a long, grey gown, and carrying a lighted candle, slowly ascending the broad stairway.

The form was that of her dead uncle, old Simon Billingford.

She could only see his back, but the figure and bearing could not be mistaken.

The long, grey flannel dressing-gown reaching nearly to his heels was the exact counterpart of the one that her uncle had universally worn.

The loose Turkish slippers with their low, padded heels were also the same, not one distinguishing mark being absent.

The figure held an old-fashioned brass candlestick in its left hand, and the light of the flaring candle shone upon a head of grey hair short and curiously tossed about, partly falling over the man's forehead.

She could just see the outline of one cheek, and it was smooth-shaven and ruddy with a glow of perfect health.

This answered exactly to the description of her uncle, now two months in his grave.

In a word, the silent grey specter before her was the exact counterpart of old Simon Billingford.

The figure slowly ascended the stairs, holding in his right hand, with which he also grasped the stair rail, a bunch of papers tied up with red tape, in true legal style.

Puzzled extremely, and also not a little terrified, Elaine watched the spectral figure ascending the stairs, and when it reached the turn, glided softly after it, keeping at some little distance behind.

The grey specter kept steadily on, not once looking back, nor pausing until it reached the landing above.

Here it paused for an instant and seemed to be muttering something to itself but Elaine could not distinguish the sounds.

In another moment it glided quickly along the passage and up another broad stairway to the next floor.

Here it passed the hand that held the papers along the wall until it came to a little niche where a marble statue had once stood, but which had been removed.

This niche was high and had a little marble shelf at the bottom, but it was exceeding narrow and not very deep.

The figure stood motionless before this recess, as if absorbed in thought, and Elaine advanced to within a few paces and stood watching.

Then she saw the figure raise its right hand and press heavily upon a painted lily at one side of the niche.

To her supreme astonishment, one half of the back of the niche slid silently behind the other, revealing an opening about ten inches wide and two or three feet high.

She then saw the figure take out a long, quaintly-carved ebony box, with brass hinges and lock, into which he put the bundle of papers in his right hand.

He then replaced the box in its secret receptacle, touched some hidden spring at the other side of the niche, and the sliding panel slowly resumed its former position.

"There, that is all safe!" Elaine heard the figure murmur. "Now we'll see if that scamp Horatio will get anything!"

The figure then suddenly turned, and Elaine saw, as distinctly as she had ever seen it in life, the well-remembered face of Simon Billingford!

It wore a calm, triumphant smile, and its eyes snapped merrily and the ripe lips half parted with a low laugh, as Elaine had seen them do hundreds of times.

The figure advanced toward her, and by the light of the candle which it held revealed a certain vague, unsubstantial look which she had not before noticed, and notwithstanding her love for her uncle, she turned and fled.

Down the broad stairways she flew, like a frightened bird, and along the passages until she reached her chamber, when she pushed aside the curtains, sprang through the open door, closing it behind her, and fell fainting upon a soft rug directly in front of the fire.

She recovered in a few moments, and going to the door, peeped out.

She saw a glimmer of light, growing momentarily fainter,

and going to the head of the stairs she saw the grey specter just stepping off the last step into the spacious hallway beneath.

She ran half way down stairs and saw him set the candle down upon a marble slab, glide between the dark, red curtains and disappear.

In an incredibly short space of time she was at the door and had thrown the curtain aside.

The ponderous oaken doors were securely locked, bolted and chained, and the heavy key swung upon an iron hook at one side.

How did the figure get out and leave the door so firmly fastened?

No one but a spirit could perform such a feat!

She had seen the ghost of her Uncle Simon!

Did it mean a warning of something dreadful?

Or did it augur some unlooked-for happiness?

Who could tell?

Thoroughly overawed by the profound mystery of the occurrence, Elaine fell in a swoon before the doors, while the light of the flickering candle illuminated her pale, beautiful face.

How long she lay there she knew not, but when she recovered she was in her own bed.

A waiting-maid was bustling to and fro, dusting and brushing and putting things to rights, while the old housekeeper was just placing a savory breakfast upon a polished mahogany table.

She had found her young mistress lying insensible upon the marble floor of the hall when she had come down in the morning to open the house, and had borne her to her room at once and sent for a doctor.

How she came there, Elaine could not tell, nor could she remember distinctly whether what she had seen was a dream or not.

Everything else was as distinct in her memory, however, as if it had actually happened; and she determined to investigate the matter to see if she had really been dreaming.

She arose and had her breakfast, and then making some excuse, she managed to steal away unobserved, and went up stairs to the little niche in the wall where she had seen the grey specter deposit the ebony box.

The passage was dark, so she got a candle; and by its light soon found the niche, and pressed her hand upon the painted lily.

At first there was no movement of the panel, but Elaine pressed with more vigor and the panel slowly moved aside.

There was the same aperture and the same ebony box that she had seen the night before.

She quickly took the box and unlocked it—the key being in the lock.

Inside was a bundle of papers tied with red tape.

Everything was as it had been the night before.

Elaine took the papers, untied the tape and glanced hurriedly at them.

Her heart gave a great bound as she read, and hurriedly thrusting the papers into the pocket of her dress, she closed the panel and ran down stairs.

Here an unexpected incident had occurred.

Her cousin, Horatio Billingford, was in the hall, having just arrived.

She saw him and advanced to meet him courteously, although she thoroughly detested him.

He saw her coming down the stairs with a smile on her lovely face, and he at once assumed his blackest looks.

"So you ain't gone yet, ain't yer?" he growled; "seems to me it takes yer long enough. I don't want no fooling nor humbug, nor crying, nor any of those things, I want you to get out."

"I shall not be in the same house more than ten minutes, fortunately," replied Elaine, with spirit. "You cannot be more desirous of having me out of your sight than I am to have you go."

"Oh, spunky, eh? that's a pretty way to talk to a man in his own house," Horatio snarled. "Do you want me to order the servants to throw you out, bag and baggage?"

"They would not do it!"

"They wouldn't, eh?"

"No."

"We'll see whether they won't or not."

At that instant there was a clamorous ring at the great front door.

"Who's that?" said Horatio, nervously.

"You'd better go to the door and see!" responded Elaine,

saucily, all her antagonism to this man aroused by his brutal conduct.

"I don't answer bells, I'm no servant to be honest!"

A footman had by this time opened the door, and Richard Arnault entered.

"Oh, my darling!" he cried, as Elaine flew to his arms.

"You are coming home with me?"

"No, you are coming home with me!"

"I?" and the young man looked puzzled.

"Yes, you, to live in this house."

"But I don't understand—has your cousin relented?"

"No, he hasn't!" returned that person, with a snarl, "and he isn't going to; so, young man, you can just escort this young woman anywhere you please. It's the first day of November and her time is up."

"It's not the first until noon," replied Richard, "and you cannot turn her out until then."

"Well, she may have till noon, then," returned the man, with a frown, "but after that she must go."

"I shall do nothing of the sort."

"You won't?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because this is my house, and I propose to remain in it."

"Your house?" sneered her cousin.

"Yes, my house."

"But—my darling—" said Richard.

"Read that," said Elaine, as she put some papers into Richard's hands.

He read for a few moments, and then gave utterance to an exclamation of surprise.

He read on, however, until he reached the end, his excitement becoming greater every moment.

"Do you believe me now?" asked the young girl, all aglow with pleasure.

"I do. This is indeed as it should be. Where did you get it?"

"Among my uncle's papers, in a secret closet that I found by accident."

"What are you two chattering about now?" asked Horatio.

"Miss Billingford is right, sir," said Richard; "and this house belongs entirely to her together with all the other property personal and real, left by her uncle, the late Simon Billingford, of most revered memory."

"Who says so?"

"I do."

"Prove it."

"With the greatest pleasure. Will you listen while I read the last will and testament of your late uncle, dated some twelve years subsequent to that which leaves you everything?"

"The mischief—the ebony box—the closet!" gasped Horatio.

"Where did you find it?"

"In the ebony box in the secret closet in the niche," said Elaine. "You evidently know the place."

"Oh, yes—yes, I know it! but who showed you the place?"

"Uncle Simon's ghost!"

"Oh, Lord!" groaned Horatio. "Does he walk around here nights?"

"He does!" said Elaine, triumphantly.

"Then you can have your old place; I don't want it," replied Horatio, trembling. "I don't like ghosts myself."

"Won't you examine the will?"

"No; that's all right;" and away bolted the terrified reprobate, and never showed his face in the house or the village again.

The will was admitted to probate, and proved beyond a doubt; and Elaine and Richard lived in the old house, and brought up a family of merry children to comfort them in their old age.

Elaine never knew for certain whether her cousin had known of the existence of a newer will, and had hidden it, not daring to destroy it or whether or not she had really seen her uncle's ghost.

At any rate, he never troubled her again, although his portrait in the spacious drawing-room always seemed to be laughing at her, after that.

Horatio was not heard of again for many years, and then it was learned that he had been killed in a duel down in Virginia.

The story of the grey specter of Castle Grim leaked out and the "local chronicler of contemporaneous events," as the reporter of the village paper called himself, wrote up the affair in lurid style, paying more attention to figures of speech, however, than to the real facts in the case, which we have given exactly as they occurred.

LOST LONNY

By Alexander Armstrong

"Gentlemen of the jury, what is your verdict?"

"We find, your honor, that the prisoner at the bar is guilty of the offense charged in the indictment, but at the same time we would recommend him to mercy."

"Prisoner at the bar," said the judge, "you have heard the verdict of these gentlemen. This is not your first offense by any means; your face is a familiar one in the courts."

"Yes, your honor, I am courted wherever I go, and my society is sought for by some of the best and wisest judges in the country."

The prisoner was evidently a hardened man, and cared little for what his sentence might be; and a casual looker-on in the court would have wondered why there was a recommendation to mercy in this case.

A rough-looking man of middle age standing near the dock, plucked the prisoner by the sleeve and bade him hush.

"You'll not mind what the poor boy says, your honor," this man said. "It's only bluff, your honor, only bluff, and you'll not think of it a moment. You will give him a light sentence, won't you, for he's all I have and I'm getting old; let him off easy, judge."

The justice adjusted his spectacles, consulted some papers lying on his desk, and then turning to the prisoner, fixed his keen eyes upon him, and addressed him as follows:

"Richard Morehouse, alias 'Wicked Dick' and a dozen other names, the court has been asked to show leniency towards you, but for what reason it is not clearly shown, except that your father is an old man and needs your help. Extenuating circumstances are mentioned, but the court fails to see that the evidence shows any such circumstances to have existed."

"Put on another pair o' glasses, judge, an' ye'll see better. I'll tell ye what the trouble was. I only gave ugly Mike one black eye when I might a' given him two and picked his pockets."

"Hush, Dick, hush, don't talk like that or you'll get the full sentence," urged the older man.

"As I have said," continued the judge, "this is by no means your first offense, and the circumstances attending this last crime made it a particularly serious one. Breaking into a house and greatly endangering the lives of the occupants, one of whom was at the point of death for many weeks, and only recovered by the providence of Heaven. By the laws of the State of New York, if that person had died, you could have been indicted for murder in the first degree."

"On'y Providence thought better o' it, and let me off easy; that's what's the matter, judge. Go on with the show—fetch in the red fire."

"In regard to the assistance that you may render your father, it is perfectly well known what that assistance is likely to be."

"Spit it out, judge, don't be bashful," said Wicked Dick, perfectly unabashed, while his father tried to stop him.

"You are both known as daring burglars, and your father, there, Red Jack, as he is called, may consider himself lucky to be able to enter this court room without being arrested. It so happened that he is not suspected of having a hand in any particular 'job' at present; and although always a bad character, he is not wanted just now, but no one can say how long it may be before he will be."

"That's right, judge, show the old man up," said Wicked Dick, with a laugh. "He'll run for congress on your recommendation some day."

"Prisoner at the bar," continued the justice, "I sentence you to imprisonment at hard labor for fifteen years, and would make the term a longer one if possible. Although young, you have shown yourself to be vicious and thoroughly unprincipled, and society will be better off while you are incarcerated. I trust that you will return to the world a better man than you leave it."

Red Jack's red head seemed to fairly burn, and his face well matched it! both seeming on fire with passion. The man ground his teeth and clenched his fists, and finally broke into a torrent of oaths.

"Beware, Judge Godley!" he shouted, shaking his fist at the Court. "You, too, have a son; take care that no harm comes to him, for I swear that by Heaven he shall be disgraced yet, and that you will repent your cruelty to me and mine!"

"Remove that man, and if he persists in his contempt of this court, let him be fined \$24, and in default thereof, remain twenty-five days in jail. The sentence is a just one, and ought to be heavier. Call the next case."

When Dick was removed to await transportation to Sing Sing, and Red Jack, his father, went out vowing vengeance. He knew well enough that the sentence was just, but he needed the assistance of his son in carrying out a scheme he had on hand; and having unsuccessfully attempted to bribe the jury, and, in an underhand way, the very magistrate himself, he was provoked beyond measure that all his plans should have signally failed, and that his promising son, who was only nineteen years old, by the way, although an adept in crime, would have to spend the next fifteen years in prison.

Judge Godley thought of the man's words, and a grave dread overcame him; for he knew that Red Jack was as vindictive as an Indian, and never broke his word when he threatened vengeance.

"Poor Lonny," he murmured to himself; "if anything should happen to the boy, I don't know how I could bear it. Now that the man has threatened, I must be on my guard."

Alonzo Godley was the only son of the judge, and a bright little fellow of ten years, smarter than most boys of that age, and perfectly idolized by the judge and his good wife, who had but two other children, twin daughters, both married and living at home; for the judge owned a splendid mansion on the Hudson, a few miles out of the city.

After the business of the Court of General Sessions was over for the day, the judge went home as quickly as possible, and told his wife what had happened and of Red Jack's threat, urging upon her the necessity of protecting Lonny in every way lest something should happen to him.

"The house is well guarded," she said, "and John and Theodore (her two sons-in-law) always sleep here at night, and are very wakeful. I am sure no one could get in."

"Perhaps not, my dear. Tell the boys to be on their guard, but say nothing to Lonny, it would only alarm him unnecessarily. Don't let him go out to see his chums at night, however, unless accompanied by Isaac."

Isaac was the footman, and was devotedly attached to his young master, and generally accompanied him when he went out; so Lonny thought nothing of it when the man suddenly increased his attention to him, being rather flattered than otherwise.

Months passed away and nothing was heard or seen of John Morehouse, who, it was rumored, had left the state, being annoyed at the surveillance of the police.

One evening as the judge was getting ready to go home, after an unusually long session, a telegraph boy met him on the Court House steps and handed him a telegram which read as follows:

FIFTH AVENUE HOTEL.

"DEAR JUDGE:—Would like very much to see you at my rooms at nine o'clock this evening. Very important business.

"REUBEN E. FENTON."

Wondering what the governor, with whom he was well acquainted, could want to see him about, the judge dined at the Astor House and shortly after eight o'clock started to go up town in a stage.

When Theodore Rivers, the husband of Judge Godley's daughter Rose, was leaving his office, he met an old college chum, whom he had not seen for some years, and the latter invited him to take dinner with himself and wife and afterwards go with them to Wallack's, an invitation which he gladly accepted.

John Thornton, the judge's other son-in-law, who was a practicing physician in Irvington, was sent for very suddenly, as he was returning home to visit a patient in Yonkers, who was reported as taken suddenly ill and needing the most immediate attention; and as a carriage was waiting, Dr. Thornton jumped in and was driven rapidly away.

Thus it happened that neither the judge nor his son-in-law were at home that evening, and Isaac had been telegraphed for from Yonkers to bring the carriage for Dr. Thornton, who had been suddenly called away.

The evening set in very early, as it lacked but a week to Christmas, and by eight o'clock it was very dark, the moon being hidden by heavy clouds.

When the judge arrived at the hotel he found that he had been the victim of a hoax, Governor Fenton not being there, nor had he even been in the city.

The judge immediately drove to the Grand Central Depot

and discovered that a train had just gone, and that the next regular out train did not start until eleven o'clock.

Dr. Thornton was driven to the house of his patient, and when he had entered, after having, as he thought, been an unusually long time on the road, the carriage drove off.

His patient was glad to see him, but expressed surprise at a professional call, as he was in excellent health. An explanation followed, and then Dr. Thornton saw that someone had been playing a practical joke upon him.

He knew nothing, however, of the absence of the other members of the family, and so accepted an invitation to spend the evening, being promised a ride home in his friend's carriage.

At about ten o'clock that evening a rough-looking man, wearing a cap, was lurking about the grounds of the Godley mansion, looking up at one of the windows on the second floor where a dim light was burning.

There was a large double piazza around that side of the house, and on the second floor there was a wide promenade, guarded by a heavy balustrade.

"There's where the young cub sleeps," growled the man. "I got 'em all away, nicely; now to work."

He climbed one of the stone pillars as nimbly as a cat, and in another minute was astride the railing making his way cautiously along to the window of Lonny's room.

At that instant the moon emerged from a bank of clouds and shone full upon the form of Red Jack, as he peered through the half-drawn curtains and saw the boy lying asleep on his bed.

He sprang to the window, which reached to the floor, and quickly pried it open, entering the rooms as noiselessly as a spirit, and advanced rapidly to the bed, where Lonny still slept, unconscious of danger.

Jack took a vial from his pocket, and moistening a dirty handkerchief with the contents, pressed it hurriedly to the boy's nostrils.

Lonny gave a gasp and a convulsive kick, and partly arose in bed; but quickly became unconscious, when Jack lifted him up in his arms, threw a blanket around him, and stepping outside, rapidly descended to the ground with his burden.

There was the clatter of wheels, and with a muttered oath the man hurried down the path and struck off among the trees, still carrying the senseless boy.

His cap was brushed off, but he could hear the sound of voices and see lights, and not daring to stop, hastened on, and presently entered a closed cab standing in the road, and was driven away at a furious gallop.

On the porch stood Judge Godley, who had just driven up. By the light of the moon he saw that Lonny's window was open, and the shrubbery around one of the pillars was sadly broken and crushed, and on a rose-bush near by was some fluttering white object.

He hastily snatched it off, and gave a great sigh, as he realized it to be a piece from his son's night shirt.

"Oh, my heaven, I am too late!" he groaned, and then entering the house, he rushed up to his son's room, when the whole awful truth burst upon him. The empty bed and the broken window told too plain a tale to be mistaken.

He had been fortunate in catching a special train which had been put on for just that evening, but he had arrived too late to be of any service.

"My poor, lost Lonny!" he groaned, in the very agony of despair. "Stolen from me to be brought up to a life of shame. Better to have died in his cradle. My poor Lonny—my lost Lonny!"

The household was quickly aroused, and then the distressed father learned how all the men had been called away, leaving his darling unprotected. He slipped out upon the piazza, when his foot struck against something.

He picked it up and saw that it was a bottle of chloroform wrapped up in a filthy handkerchief.

"This is Red Jack's work, and too well has he succeeded," he muttered. "I feared something terrible would happen."

He went down stairs and out upon the lawn, where he discovered a cap lying in the moonlight just under a tree. He picked it up, and carrying it into the house, found some papers in it, among them some telegraph blanks.

"I see it all now," he said. "The plan was well laid, and the villain was determined to succeed. Oh, my poor lost Lonny!"

Somewhat later that evening, as Dr. Thornton was returning in his friend's carriage, he heard the sound of a vehicle rapidly approaching. It was very dark, the moon having gone behind the clouds again, and at a sharp turn in the road the two carriages collided suddenly, the horse of the strange one being thrown down, and a forward wheel coming off.

The driver swore like a pirate, and lashed his horses but one had broken a leg and could not rise.

The physician was thrown to the floor by the shock, but quickly picked himself up and advanced to the other carriage to see what damage had been done; and was in the very act of opening the door when the driver aimed a furious blow at him with the butt end of his whip.

He dodged, and threw the door open and called to his own driver to jump down.

At the next moment he saw a stout-built man struggling with some white object, and heard a cry for help.

"John—John, it's me!" shouted a boyish voice. "It's me, Lonny, the man is running away with me!"

Before he could reach the spot the driver of his carriage had jumped down and struck the man a tremendous blow on the head, which felled him like an ox, the red blood spouting over Lonny's white shirt and into his face.

The other driver seeing how matters stood, jumped to the ground, and abandoning the burglar and the horses, made his way off up the road as fast as his legs could carry him.

"Why, Lonny, how did you come here?" asked his brother, picking the boy up from the ground where he had fallen. "Where were you going at this time of night with nothing but a nightshirt and a blanket? In your bare feet, too!"

"Dunno, John, but I guess somebody was running away with me. Hold a light."

"Is your carriage good enough to go the rest of the way, James?" asked the doctor, wrapping the blanket all around his nephew, and taking him in his arms.

"No, sir, I am afraid not; the springs are broken and one axle bent. We got off better than the other fellow. Hi—there, you villain, don't you try to get away or I'll give you another crack!"

This last injunction was bestowed upon Red Jack, who was about to rise to his feet.

He obeyed sullenly, and then James, cutting the reins from the other harness, tied him securely, fastening his arms behind his back, and threw him into the carriage.

"Stay there, you villain, and don't you stir till I tell you. We will have the police here in a jiffy."

"I hear wheels," said Dr. Thornton, suddenly. "and going the same way we were. Can it be this man's accomplices?"

The sounds rapidly came nearer, and then the two men saw a carriage which they hailed, and discovered to their intense surprise that Isaac was driving it.

"They told me you had gone, sir, but I wondered that you should have sent for me and then not waited," he said.

It was not until the next day that the matter was thoroughly explained, but in the meantime Lonny was put into the carriage and made as comfortable as possible, while his brother took the reins.

Isaac was sent on the good horse belonging to the strange team, to the nearest station house, while James waited for his return with the police and assistance from his employer, so that the carriage could be taken home.

Lonny was soon restored to his despairing parents, who had given up all hopes of seeing him again. Apart from being cold and frightened and a little bruised, the boy was uninjured, and he was soon as sound asleep as when Red Jack had intruded so rudely upon him and carried him away.

The coachman never claimed his horses, and Red Jack is now serving out a long sentence in company with his hopeful son, Wicked Dick.

Lonny is a man now, and is known as Alonzo Godley, Esq., a prominent lawyer, bidding fair to occupy the same position once held by his father, who has retired from active life, and is spending the remainder of his days in his beautiful home on the Hudson.

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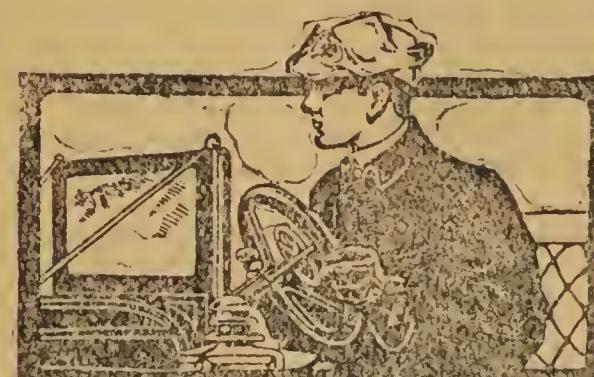
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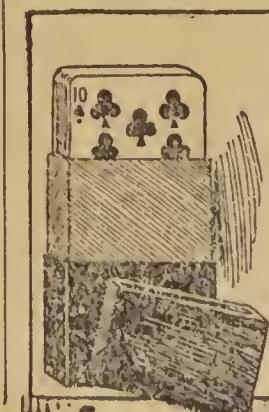
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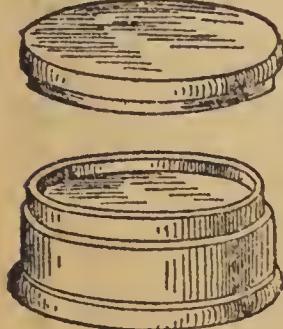


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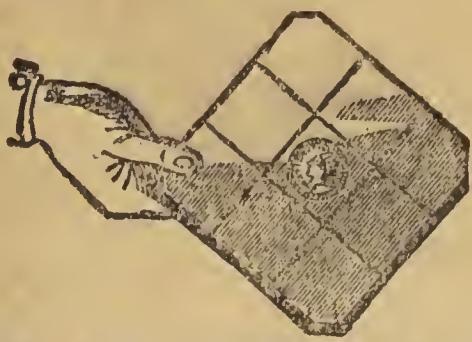
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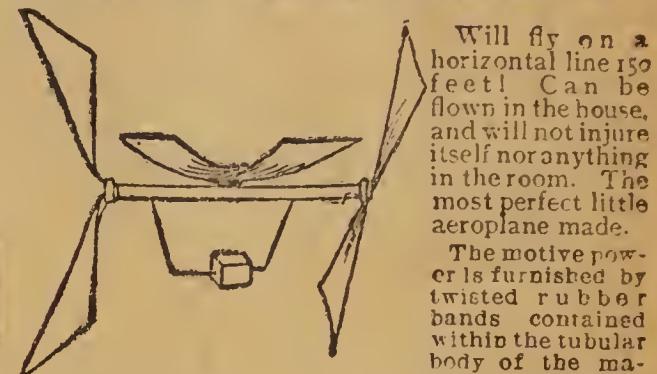
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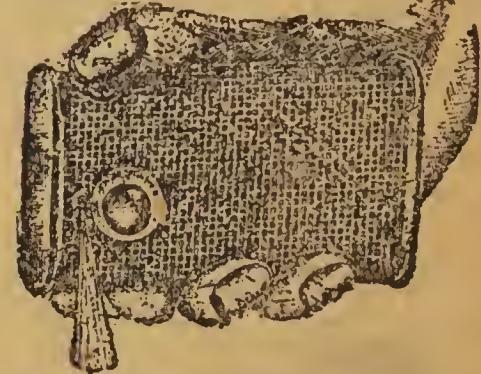


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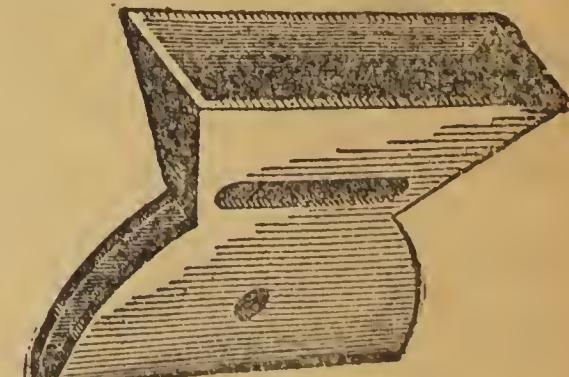
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